



Q180 QUESTIONS

Enquiries about Islam

Volume One:
The Practical Laws



Compiled by a Group of Muslim
Scholars Under the Supervision of
Ayatullah al-'Uzma Hajj Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi

Translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi

180 QUESTIONS

ENQUIRIES ABOUT ISLAM

VOLUME ONE: THE PRACTICAL LAWS

Extracted from the Writings of
Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā Ḥājj Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī

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Translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islamic terminology from the Arabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table mentioned below.

ء	’	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و	w
س	s	ي	y
ش	sh	ه	h
ص	ṣ		

Long Vowels

ا	ā
و	ū
ي	ī

Short Vowels

— [َ]	a
— [ُ]	u
— [ِ]	i

ﷺ - Free from Imperfections and Exalted is He

ﷺ - Prayers be upon him and his family

ﷺ - Peace be upon him

ﷺ - Peace be upon her

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS BOOK BY AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

QUESTIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a key to the treasures of human knowledge, and individuals and nations who tend to question less come to acquire a reduced share from this vast treasure. Basically, it is the right of every person to ask questions and obtain their answers, and none can be deprived of this logical and rational privilege.

The Noble Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized this aspect - ask those, who possess knowledge, about that of which you do not possess knowledge.

﴿فَاسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The extensiveness of this Qur'anic ruling reveals that Islam does not recognize any limits or restrictions as far as the issue of 'questioning' is concerned, and permits the Muslims and even the non-Muslims (despite appearing to be general in meaning, this verse, in reality is addressed to the non-Muslims) to pose every kind of question, including those pertaining to various doctrinal, social, ethical and political issues, to those who have knowledge about them.

Exceptions to this rule are misleading questions asked with the intention of spoiling people's faith, distorting constructive ideas, fermenting disturbance and confusion in the minds of the public,

mere wrangling, baseless arguments, obstinacy and prejudice. In reality, these are not questions but destructive inhumane plots in the guise of questions.

In any case, since the Noble Qur'an is a colossal encyclopaedia of divine sciences and human affairs, on numerous occasions and in connection with various verses, there are questions that come to the fore - a great number of which, due to lack of applicability in those periods, have remained unanswered in the books of past commentators.

While writing Tafsīr-e-Namūnah (with the assistance of some accomplished scholars), we strived to propound all these questions - especially those related to present-day issues - and to answer them in detail.

Since it appeared essential that everyone, especially the educated youths, possess the answers to these questions, Ḥujjatul Islam Agha-e-Ḥusainī and a number of honourable scholars of the Theological Seminary of Qum - whose names appear in the introduction of the book - exerted themselves greatly in extracting these questions and answers from the 27 volumes of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and 10 volumes of Payām-e-Qur'an. Consequently, they accumulated one hundred and eighty important questions and expended great effort in imparting a systematic arrangement to them - may Allāh accept their efforts.

It is hoped that this collection creates a new opening for everyone - especially the beloved Muslim youths - regarding issues pertaining to Islam and the Qur'an, and serves as provision for all of us for the Day of Judgment.

Ḥawzah 'Ilmiyyah, Qum
Nasir Makarim Shirāzī

BIOGRAPHY OF ĀYATULLĀ AL-‘UZMĀ MAKĀRIM SHĪRĀZĪ

THE EMINENT SCHOLAR, Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī was born in the year 1924 in the city of Shīrāz in Iran into a religious family who were well known for their high level of spirituality and noble ethical traits. His Eminence finished his elementary school studies in Shīrāz, where his intelligence, excellent memory and eagerness to learn, made him amongst the best students, often completing two years of studies in one year!

The conditions which existed in Iran in those days obligated this young man - who possessed such talent and aptitude - to choose the path of university and use his gifts to attain a secular qualification. However, the hand of destiny, the blessings of the Merciful Lord and his own secret desire to delve deeper into the teachings of Islam, drew this young man’s attention towards Islamic studies; Especially because, since after the spring of 1941 (when Iran became embroiled in the 2nd World War), the regime’s restrictions relaxed and the Islamic Seminaries gained renewed popularity.

HIS STUDIES

His Eminence started his formal Islamic studies at the age of 14 at Madreseh-ye Āghā Babākhān-e Shīrāz, and within a short period of time, he was able to complete the prerequisite preliminary studies such as morphology (ṣarf), Arabic grammar (naḥw), logic (manṭiq), exposition (bayān), and rhetoric (badī).

He then turned his attention towards the fields of jurisprudence (fiqh) and principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and once again, due to his exceptional abilities, he was able to finish the study of the complete levels of introductory and both the levels of the intermediate Islamic studies in just four years! During this time, a group of students from the Islamic Seminary in Shīrāz were also benefiting from his classes.

The positive criticisms and personal opinions of His Eminence concerning the classes being held in Qum and also in relation to the need for including extra information within the books that were being taught at the various Theological Seminaries hinted at the bright future which awaited him. Meanwhile in religious gatherings in this city, his capabilities, genius, meticulousness and deep thought were witnessed by others and no one was able to deny his Allāh-given talents.

When this brilliant star was a mere 18 years old, through his penetrating thought and versatile pen, he wrote a commentary on the book *Kifāyatu'l Uṣūl*, in which he shed light on some ambiguous issues mentioned in this traditional work. At the age of 18, he formally entered the Theological Seminary of Qum and for the next five years, he attended the religious gatherings and classes of some of the greatest teachers of those days, such as *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Burūjerdī* رحمته الله and other great personalities.

In order for His Eminence to become better acquainted with the illustrious scholars who were studying and teaching in one of the greatest Theological Seminaries of the Shī'a, and to better understand their ideas and thoughts, in the year 1950, he made his way to the *Ḥawzatu'l 'Ilmiyyah* of Najaf al-Ashraf in Iraq. It was here that he was able to take part in the classes of some of the greatest teachers such as: *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā al-Ḥakīm* رحمته الله, *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā al-Khūī* رحمته الله and *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā 'Abdul Hādī al-Shīrāzī* رحمته الله and others.

At the age of 24, His Eminence was granted permission for independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) from two of the great scholars of Najaf al-Ashraf. In addition, *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā al-Ḥakīm* رحمته الله wrote a brief foreword to His Eminence's work, *The Book of Ṭahārah*.

His acquisition of knowledge continued with the great teachers in Najaf until economical restraints forced him to leave this holy city, and return back to Iran in the year 1951. He chose to settle in the holy city of Qum, which in those days required religious scholars.

Once again, he joined the circle of scholars who later on, had a profound impact on his life.

After returning to Iran, Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Makārim Shīrāzī began teaching the intermediate and higher level of studies (khārij) in uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh – and he has taught these classes for almost 28 years now, benefiting a large number of students in the process. Furthermore, after teaching many of the important books of fiqh, he went on to write summaries and notes of these great works. At present, his sessions at the khārij level on uṣūl are one of the most popular classes in the Ḥawzatul ‘Ilmiyyah of the Shī‘a and there are close to 2,000 dedicated scholars and students who attend and benefit from his lectures.

From the time of his youth, he used to write books in various fields of Islamic studies such as theology, Islamic awareness and the issue of wilāyah (of the Ahlu’l Bait عليه السلام). Later, he started to write on the exegesis of the Qur’an, fiqh and uṣūl al-fiqh and he is currently recognized as one of the most important writers in the Muslim world.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

He played an active role in the events which culminated in the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and it is because of this that the Shah imprisoned him several times. He was exiled on three separate occasions to the cities of Chabhār, Mahābād and Anārak. After the Revolution, he was appointed to the first Council of Representatives (Majlis-e Khubragān) where he played an important role in formulating the first constitution.

HIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī has been very active in various fields of teaching and guiding the upcoming scholars of the Theological Seminary of Qum, and has initiated various projects, of which we will mention just a few:

1. A Religious Publication of the Shī'a Centre: For a long time, His Eminence felt the need for the Ḥawzatu'l 'Ilmiyyah of Qum to have a general publication which would be able to defend the Shī'a against the ever-growing works that were being published to misguide people.

In addition, people had always expected this from the great Islamic seminaries and there was pressure from different parts of the community, including the supreme religious authorities (marāja-ye taqlīd) of the Ḥawza and others, to publish a magazine that would be able to answer the religious enquiries of the youth and also to counter the books and magazines that were misleading the people.

Due to the fact that at that time, there were some intellectuals who were not ready to accept such a publication, His Eminence sought out serious and resourceful thinkers to shoulder the heavy responsibility of producing such a publication. In this regard, His Eminence, along with a group of other scholars and the assistance of the leaders of the Ḥawzatu'l 'Ilmiyyah of Qum and the financial support of well-wishers, launched the magazine, "Maktab-e-Islam". This magazine was unprecedented in the Shī'a world, and perhaps from the point of view of the range of its circulation, it is one of the leading religious magazines being published in the entire Muslim world. This magazine gave a fresh and new path of direction to the great students and thinkers of the Ḥawzah.

At present, this publication is in its 39th year - offering its valuable services to the Muslim world and the Shī'a communities. It has found a special spot within the hearts of the youth, the university students, teachers and other learned personalities and has spread the light of Islam and the Shī'a school of thought from its centre (Qum) to the entire world.

2. Organizing Gatherings to Offer Lessons in Theology and other Religious Teachings: His Eminence felt that the classical works that had been written in the field of Islamic Theology were no longer sufficient with the passing of time, to address modern needs. The

traditional books of theology had been written in a century when the kind of problems we encounter today did not exist. The older books discussed theological issues such as the disputes between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites and other similar topics, which are no longer applicable today and which have become just of passing interest only.

Due to these facts, His Eminence, once again calling upon his literary talents and abilities, was able to present the subjects of theological and principal beliefs in a novel and unprecedented manner. By organizing theological discussions, he made hundreds of people conversant with these subjects, and he compiled the summaries of these sessions in the form of books.

3. Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth: In addition to sessions on theology, His Eminence organised other classes through which his students were also instructed about the teachings of eight current world religions so that they could engage in debates or correspond with the proponents of these faiths and counter their beliefs and ideologies.

Within a short period of time, these classes were able to produce able students who were well informed in their specialized field of study and today, an elite group of youth within the Ḥawzatu'l 'Ilmiyyah, are busy studying these topics. Furthermore, in order to safeguard the youth from the clutches of corruption, His Eminence formed an organization called the Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth. One of the outcomes of this council was the publication of material that was interesting to the youth, and these quickly became established amongst the youth in the country.

4. Struggles Against Eclectic Tendencies: On one of his trips to the city of Shīrāz, His Eminence noticed that Sūfism had gathered popular support. A group of people requested him to write a book which would outline the principles of the Sūfīs – one that would explain their beliefs in an agreeable and respectful manner. His Eminence, by making use of the resources available to him, wrote

this book in his usual style, and the book was printed in the year 1953 CE with the title, *Jalwa-ye Haq* (The Manifestation of Truth).

The style in which he wrote this book caught the attention of the late Āyatullāh al-‘Uẓmā Burūjerdī رحمته الله and he requested His Eminence to see him and congratulated him for his valuable efforts. In relation to this book, Āyatullāh al-‘Uẓmā Burūjerdī رحمته الله made the following commendation, “I have gone through this book in my spare time and did not find even the smallest of weak points in it. May Allāh reward you for your troubles.”

5. Establishing Organizations and Centres of Learning: His Eminence had made the intention of establishing such organizations in the same number as the Maṣūmīn عليه السلام, which is 14. By the grace of Allāh, he has thus far been successful in establishing four such important schools within the Theological Seminary of Qum and two religious organizations for the welfare of the students who are living in the city of Mashad.

6. Writings – The number of publications of His Eminence currently lies at approximately 130 books which have all been printed – some of which have been reprinted more than 30 times and others which have been translated into more than 10 languages and have been published in various parts of the world.

The commentary of the Qur’an authored by him, *Tafsīr-e-Namuneh* (The Model Commentary) has been translated into many languages, including Arabic (*al-Amthāl Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’an*), and can be found in many homes. An English commentary of the Qur’an entitled, “Light of the Holy Qur’an” is also currently being published which is largely based on this work. In addition to this commentary, he has also authored a thematic commentary of the Qur’an entitled, *Payām-e-Qur’an* (The Message of the Qur’an) in ten volumes. These two commentaries have opened up a new chapter in the field of exegesis of the Noble Qur’an.

One complete course in *usūl al-dīn* has been covered in the first series of *Payām-e-Qur'an*, while the author has recently embarked on a second series covering ethics (*akhlāq*) in the *Qur'an*. The first volume of this commentary has recently been translated into English and will be printed soon by the World Federation of KSIMC, based in the United Kingdom.

In addition, the books he has written on theological beliefs have ably provided a defence for students and scholars against the onslaught of books containing false beliefs and untruths.

Of the books of *fiqh* that he has written, we can mention the following: *Anwār al-Fuqahah*, *al-Qawā'idu'l Fiqhiyyah*, *Anwār al-Uṣūl* and the notes and commentaries on the complete text of *'Urwat al-Wuthqā* which have been printed many times over.

His practical guide for Muslims (*Tawḍīḥ al-Masā'il*) has also been printed many times and has also been translated into Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Azari and English.

A complete list of other publications of this great scholar which have been translated into English and are available is as follows. Most of these can be read on his website at **www.makaremshirazi.org**.

1. Ethical Discourses [40 Lectures on Ethics and Morality] – Volume 1, 2 & 3 translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
2. *Khums: The Islamic Tax* translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service [www.al-haqq.com]
3. *Lessons in Islamic Beliefs – Tawḥīd, 'Adālah, Nubuwwah, Imamah, and Ma'ād* translated by Laleh Bakhtiyar – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]
4. *Life Under the Grace of Ethics* translated by Monir Shafiei – published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

5. Message of the Qur'an – A Thematic Exegesis of the Noble Qur'an Volume 1 of 10 translated by Saleem Bhimji - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
6. One Hundred and Eighty Questions – Volumes 1, 2 & 3 translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
7. One Hundred and Fifty Lessons for Life translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]
8. Our Beliefs translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
9. Philosophy of Islamic Rulings written in co-operation with Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī Translated by Sayyid Athar Rizvi – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]
10. Summary of the Islamic Rulings translated by 'Alī Abdul Rasheed - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
11. Tafsīr of the Noble Qur'an – Sūratul Jinn translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service and the World Federation of KSIMC [www.al-haqq.com] & [www.world-federation.org]
12. The Ḥadīth of Ghadir – The Expressive Evidence for Imamate translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
13. The Noble Qur'an – Translation and Commentary – Volume 1 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

14. The Noble Qur'an - Translation and Commentary - Volume 2 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
15. The Noble Qur'an - Translation and Commentary - Volume 3 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
16. The Noble Qur'an - Translation and Commentary - Volume 4 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
17. The Islamic Laws translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, distinguished Shi'ite scholars have authored numerous commentaries, some of which have been a source of benefit for the scholars, the Ḥawza 'Ilmiyyah and those who have been attracted to the Qur'an. However there was demand for a commentary possessing the excellences of Tafsīr-e-Namunah, in the Persian language, especially in this period of time wherein there is an ever-increasing focus towards comprehending the Noble Qur'an.

Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī, with the co-operation of some distinguished scholars, has fulfilled this requirement and done an invaluable service to the Noble Qur'an by authoring this valuable commentary

Some of the features of this commentary, which have contributed to its extra-ordinary universality and attraction, are as follows:

1. Although this commentary is in Persian, its scientific and research aspects have been given such consideration and emphasis that it benefits not only the common masses, who are interested in comprehending the Qur'an, but also scholars and men of learning.
2. While interpreting the verses, rather than dwelling on unnecessary points, particular attention has been paid to those important issues that could have a great impact upon the lives of individuals and the society.
3. In connection with the topics that are propounded in the verses, separate and succinct discussions have been presented in this commentary in such a manner that a brief study of these would make the reader independent of the need to refer to other books on these topics.
4. The use of intricate terminology has been avoided; nevertheless, whenever necessary, explanations have been provided in the footnotes so that in addition to scholars and people of learning, this commentary is also useful for the general public.

5. One of the important distinctions of this commentary is that it presents solutions for present-day issues, and answers for various kinds of questions and objections pertaining to the Uṣul and Furū‘ of religion, and Islamic sciences and culture.

In view of these salient features, we sought permission from the reverend teacher for collecting the questions and answers separately, and presenting them before the general public, especially the dear youths. Fortunately, he responded positively to our request and so, with the co-operation of friends, Ḥujjaj al-Islam Aḥmad Ja‘farī, Sayyid ‘Alī Riḍā Ja‘farī, Sayyid Murtaḍā Mūsawī, Sayyid Asghar Ḥusainī and Muḥammad Ḥusain Muḥammadī, the entire Tafsīr-e-Namunah and the subjective commentary Payām-e-Qur’an were subjected to a detailed and meticulous study. All the instances were extracted and this book, containing 180 questions and answers, was then organized.

At this juncture it is necessary to mention a few points:

1. At times, answers to certain questions have been presented in various places in the commentaries (Tafsīr-e-Namunah and Payām-e-Qur’an) and so all the instances were collected and correlated in a special manner, and mentioned in one place in this book.
2. In this collection care has been exercised to refrain from presenting questions pertaining to the commentary of the verses. This is because our objective was to compile those questions that are propounded in our religious society and not questions relating to the commentary of the verses – for the answers to the latter can be obtained only after a study of the entire commentary.
3. It may be questioned: ‘Is this collection not a repetition of the book ‘Pursish-ha Wa Pasukh-hae Madhhabi’, authored by the reverend teacher and Āyatullāh Subḥānī?’ In this regard it should be known that there are only 30 questions that are common to both of them.

4. Although the compilation of this book may appear to have been a simple task, however the various stages of the work, whether it be the studying of the commentaries, the extraction of the questions and answers, the arrangement and organisation of the repeated portions... demanded a great deal of time.

5. From the entire collection of 180 questions and answers, 143 questions are from Tafsīr-e-Namunah, 35 from the commentary Payām-e-Qur'an, one from Payām-e-Imam (the commentary on Nahjul Balāghah by the reverend teacher) and one from the book Āfaridegar-e-Jihān (a collection of the reverend teacher's lectures). It is hoped that this insignificant service finds acceptance by Ḥaḍrat Baqīyatullāh - May our souls be his ransom.

Sayyid Ḥusāin Ḥusāinī

180 QUESTIONS – PART I

THE BRANCHES OF RELIGION

THE PRAYERS

1. What is the philosophy behind Wuḍū¹ and Ghusl²?

Undoubtedly, Wuḍū possesses two manifest benefits - the medical benefit and the ethical and spiritual one. From the medical point of view, washing of the face and hands five times a day or at the very least, three times a day, has an appreciable influence as far as the cleanliness of the body is concerned. Wiping the head and the exterior portion of the feet - the condition here being that the water reaches the hair and the skin - means that we keep these portions clean too. We shall allude later when discussing the philosophy of ghusl, that the contact of water with skin has a special effect in achieving the equilibrium of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves of the body.

As for the ethical and spiritual aspect, since it is performed for Allāh and with the intention of pleasing Him, it possesses an educative influence; especially since its implicit meaning - from head to toe I strive to obey You - serves to corroborate this ethical and spiritual philosophy.

In a tradition, Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام says: “The reason why the order for (the performance of) Wuḍū has been issued, and (the reason) why the acts of worship should commence by it is that when the servants stand before Allāh and converse with Him, they should be clean, away from uncleanness and pollution, and act in

¹ Minor ritual ablution (Tr.)

² Major ritual ablution (Tr.)

accordance with His orders. Apart from this, Wuḍū eliminates drowsiness and lethargy from man so that the heart can acquire the purity and luminosity for standing in the presence of Allāh.”³

When we explain the philosophy of ghusl, the philosophy of Wuḍū should become more clear.

PHILOSOPHY OF GHUSL

Some people question: Why does Islam order a person in the state of ‘janābat’⁴ to wash his entire body whereas it is only a particular organ that becomes unclean? Is there a difference between urinal emission and seminal discharge so as to necessitate the washing of only the organ, in the former, but the entire body, in the latter?

There are two answers to this question - one brief and the other comprehensive.

The brief answer is that the discharge of semen from the human body is not an act that is restricted to just one part of the body (unlike urine and other body wastes), a claim which is substantiated by the fact that the effect of the discharge becomes manifest on the entire body. Subsequent to a discharge, all the cells of the body slip into a characteristic lethargy; which is an indication of its effect on all the parts of the body.

EXPLANATION

Studies conducted by scientists reveal that within the human body there exist two vegetative nervous networks which control and regulate all the activities of the body. These two nervous networks - the sympathetic nerves and the parasympathetic nerves - are spread out throughout the body and around all the internal and external systems and tracts. The function of the sympathetic nerves is to accelerate and stimulate the activities of the various tracts of the body, whereas the parasympathetic nerves function to

³ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 1, pg. 257

⁴ Ceremonial uncleanness (Tr.)

decelerate and diminish them. In effect, one plays the role of the accelerator of an automobile while the other plays the role of the brakes; with a balanced functioning of these two sets of nerves, the systems of the body work in a balanced and normal manner.

At times certain occurrences in the body disrupt this balance and equilibrium - one of these being the issue of 'orgasm', which is usually contemporaneous with a seminal discharge.

In such cases, the parasympathetic nerves (the decelerating nerves) tend to take a lead over the sympathetic nerves and consequently disrupt the equilibrium, negatively.

It has also been established that amongst the things that could force the sympathetic nerves into activity and re-establish the lost equilibrium is contact of water with the body, and since the effect of orgasm is noticeably felt on all parts of the body and the equilibrium existing between these two sets of nerves is disrupted all over the body, hence it has been ordered that after sexual intercourse or seminal discharge the entire body should be washed with water so that as a result of its regenerative effect, equilibrium is once again established between these two sets of nerves all over the body.⁵

Of course, the benefits of ghusl are not just confined to the above for, in addition to this, it is also a form of worship whose ethical influence cannot be denied. It is for this reason that if the body is washed without the intention of seeking His pleasure and in compliance with His orders, the ghusl would be deemed to be incorrect. In reality, seminal discharge or sexual intercourse tends to affect the soul as well as the body - the soul gets drawn towards material pleasures, while the body is overcome by listlessness and

5 The tradition of Imām 'Alī Ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام probably alludes to this issue when it states:

لَأَنَّ الْجَنَابَةَ خَارِجَةٌ مِنْ كُلِّ جَسَدِهِ فَلِذَلِكَ وَجَبَ عَلَيْهِ تَطْهِيرُ جَسَدِهِ كُلِّهِ.

"The 'janabat' comes out from his entire body and hence it is obligatory for him to wash his entire body." *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 1, pg. 466

stagnation. The ghusl of janābat, which is a washing of the body and also of the soul (due to its being performed in compliance with Allāh’s orders and with the intention of seeking His pleasure), exercises a two-fold effect upon the soul and the body - leading the soul towards Allāh and spirituality while at the same time leading the body towards cleanliness, liveliness and activity.

In addition to the above, the obligation of the ghusl of janābat is an Islamic compulsion for maintaining cleanliness of the body and observance of hygiene throughout the life. There are numerous individuals, who are neglectful of their cleanliness and hygiene, but this Islamic ruling forces them to wash themselves at regular intervals and keep themselves clean. This is not specific to the people of the past eras, for even in our times there are numerous such individuals, who, for various reasons, tend to be neglectful of their cleanliness and hygiene (however, this is a general and universal rule which includes even one who has recently washed his body).

The abovementioned three aspects clearly illustrate why the ghusl ought to be performed and the entire body washed after a seminal discharge (sleeping or awake) and similarly, after sexual intercourse (even if not accompanied by a seminal discharge).

2. What is the philosophy behind Tayammum⁶?

Numerous people question as to what benefit could the hitting of hands upon the earth and then wiping them over the forehead and the back of the hands possibly possess, especially in the light of our knowledge that very many kinds of soil are dirty, polluted and a medium for the transfer of microbes?

In answering such objections, attention ought to be paid to two points:

1. The Ethical Benefit: Tayammum is one of the acts of worship in which the ‘soul’ of worship - in the true meaning of the word -

⁶ Ablution with earth (Tr.)

becomes manifest. This is because man wipes his forehead, which is the most honourable portion of his body, by means of his hands that have been struck upon the earth in order to exhibit his humbleness and humility towards his Lord as if to say: My forehead and my hands are totally humble and subservient in Your presence - after which, he proceeds to engage himself in prayers or other acts of worship that require Wuḍū or ghusl. This, in itself, has a great effect in developing within the people a spirit of humility, subservience and thanksgiving.

2. The Sanitary Benefit: Today, it has been established that soil, due to its containing numerous bacteria, is able to do away with contamination and pollution. These bacteria, whose work is to decompose organic substances and eliminate various kinds of infections, are generally located, in numerous numbers, on the surface of the earth or at less depths, where they are better able to benefit from the air and sunlight. It is for this reason that an animal carcass or a human body - when buried after death, and similarly polluted matter that is on the surface of the earth - get decomposed in a comparatively short period, and in the face of bacterial attack, the infection gets destroyed. Surely, if the soil were not to have possessed such a characteristic, the entire planet, in a short period, would have transformed into a centre of infection. Essentially, soil possesses a property that is similar to an antibiotic and is extraordinarily effective in eliminating microbes.

Thus, pure soil is not only uncontaminated but instead, serves to eliminate contamination and in this respect it can, to a certain extent, be a substitute for water - the difference being that water is the dissolver, meaning that it dissolves the bacteria and carries it with itself whereas soil eliminates the microbes.

But it ought to be noted that the earth for tayammum should always be pure (ṭāhir), just as the Qur'an employing an interesting expression⁷ says: طَيِّبًا⁸

Interestingly, the use of the word صَعِيدٌ⁹, which has been derived from the root صَعُودٌ¹⁰, is an allusion to the fact that it is better to use the soil lying on the surface of the ground for this purpose - the same soil, which receives the air and the sunshine, and contains the microbe-killing bacteria. If such a soil also happens to be pure, then tayammum by means of it shall possess the above benefits without carrying the slightest of detriment.¹¹

3. What is the manner of washing the face, and wiping the head and the feet in Wuḍū?

Verse number 6 of Sūratul Māidah makes a mention of all those things that bring about the purification of man's soul and hence, a considerable portion of the rulings associated with Wuḍū, ghusl and tayammum, which bring about purification of the soul, have been explained therein. Initially the believers are addressed and the rulings related to Wuḍū, are mentioned as follows:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ﴾

“O you who believe! When you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles.”

7 Sūratul Māidah (5), Verse 6; فَتَيَمُّنُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا (Tr.)

8 Pure (Tr.)

9 Earth. (Tr.)

10 Rising or ascending (Tr.)

11 Tafsīr-e-Namūnah, vol. 3, pg. 400

In this verse the portion of the hand that ought to be washed during Wuḍū has been mentioned, since مِرْفَقٍ is the plural of مِرْفَقٌ - meaning elbow. Since it is possible that when it is said “wash your hands”, it could be thought that they should be washed till the wrists - as this is the measure that is generally washed - the verse, in order to do away with this misconception, specifies ‘as far as the elbows’ (إِلَى الْمِرْفَاقِ).

From the above explanation it becomes clear that the word إِلَى in the verse is only for mentioning the limits of washing and not the manner of washing as some have imagined - having taken the verse to mean: Wash the hands from the tips of the fingers towards the elbows (as is prevalent amongst a group from amongst the Ahlus Sunnah).

The above issue is similar to the case when a person instructs a worker to paint the walls of a room from the floor up to a height of one meter. It is plainly evident that it is not intended that the wall should be painted from the bottom towards the top - rather, it means that this is the portion that has to be painted - neither more nor less.

Hence, only the extent that needs to be necessarily washed has been mentioned in the verse; however, as far as the manner of washing is concerned, it has been mentioned in the traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ that have reached us by means of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, and it is to wash the hands from the elbows towards the fingertips.

The letter (ب), which is found in the word (بِرُّؤُسِكُمْ) - according to the explicit statements of some of the traditions and clear opinions of some of the lexicographers - is used to denote ‘a part’ (or portion) - as such the meaning conveyed by the verse is: ‘Wipe a portion of your heads’ which, in our traditions, has been delineated as the anterior one-fourth region of the head and this one-fourth portion ought to be wiped with the hand, however small be the measure of wiping.

It follows that the practice which is prevalent amongst some of the Sunni groups, who wipe their entire heads and even their ears, is inconsistent with the meaning conveyed by the verse.

The word **أَرْجُلِكُمْ** being located next to **بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ** is a testimony to the fact that the legs should also be wiped and not washed. (And if we observe that during recitation, **أَرْجُلِكُمْ** is recited such that (ج) possesses the fathah (the vowel point for ‘a’), this is due to it being superimposed upon the place of **بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ** and not on the word **(وُجُوهِكُمْ)**^{12 and 13}

4. What is the need to face the Qiblah in prayers?

Verse number 115 of Sūratul Baqarah states:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ﴾

“To Allāh belong the east and the West: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allāh.”

In consideration of the above verse the question that comes to mind is: If Allāh is present wherever we face, what then is the need to face the Qiblah (during the prayers)?

(The order for) facing the Qiblah is not at all intended to confine the presence of the Holy Allāh in a particular direction. However, since man is a material entity and thus, must necessarily face a direction while offering his prayers, it has been ruled that all should face one particular direction during their prayers. This is with the objective of realizing unity and harmony amongst the Muslims, and preventing confusion, disorder and scattering amongst them. Just reflect how scathing and disorderly it would be if each person were

¹² There is no doubt that there exists a comparatively great separation between **بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ** and **أَرْجُلِكُمْ** making the superimposition upon it to appear remote. Apart from this, a great number of Qur’an reciters have also recited the word **أَرْجُلِكُمْ** with (ج) possessing the *kasrah* (the vowel point for ‘i’).

¹³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 285

to offer his prayers in a different direction and the people were to establish scattered rows (for the prayers)?

Incidentally, the direction that has been stipulated as the Qiblah (the direction towards the Ka'bah) is a region that is not only holy but also one of the most ancient bases of monotheism and so, directing oneself towards it serves to awaken the monotheistic reminiscences (within oneself).¹⁴

5. What secrets lay behind the changing of the Qiblah?

The change of Qiblah from Bayt al-Maqdas to the holy Ka'bah was a puzzle for everyone; those who were of the opinion that every rule ought to be permanent and unchanging, mused: If we had to necessarily pray in the direction of the Ka'bah, why was it not ordered from the very onset? If Bayt al-Maqdas, which had been regarded as the Qiblah for the previous prophets was superior, why then was it changed?

The enemies too found the issue a fertile ground to poison the minds of the people. They probably might have said: At the start he ﷺ turned towards the Qiblah of the previous prophets but after tasting victories he was overcome by racial and nationalistic tendencies and therefore substituted it with the Qiblah of his own people!

Or they might have said: He initially accepted Bayt al-Maqdas to be his Qiblah in order to attract the Jews and the Christians towards his religion, but later, when he observed that it did not prove effective, he changed it to the Ka'bah.

The agitation and commotion that these whisperings must have generated - especially in a society in which the sediments of the eras of idolatry and polytheism still existed, and one that had yet to be completely illuminated by the light of knowledge, science, and faith - is all too evident.

¹⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 415

As a result, the Qur'an explicitly states in verse 143 of Sūratul Baqarah that this was a great trial to discern the stance adopted by the believers and the polytheists.

It is not improbable that one of the important reasons for the change in Qiblah could be the following issue:

In that period, since the Ka'bah had been the hub for the idols of the polytheists it was ordered that the Muslims should temporarily offer their prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas and in this way separate their ranks and disassociate themselves from the polytheists. But when they emigrated to Madinah and established their own community and rule, and when their ranks were completely demarcated from that of the others, it was not necessary to continue with the existing posture and hence they returned towards the holy Ka'bah, the most ancient focal point of the prophets and the centre of monotheism.

It is plainly evident that offering prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas was very difficult for those, who regarded the Ka'bah to be the spiritual edifice of their own tribe, and equally difficult was the return towards the Ka'bah, after having become habituated to the first Qiblah.

In this manner the believers were placed in a crucible of examination in order that the traces of polytheism, which still existed within themselves, get burnt away in the hot furnace of this test, they sever their association with their polytheistic past, and there develops within them the spirit of absolute submission before the orders of Allāh.

Basically, just as we have previously mentioned, Allāh does not possess any place or location; the Qiblah is just a code for establishing unity within the ranks of the believers and reviving the reminiscences of monotheism and so, changing it would not transform anything. The important thing is to submit to His

commands and shatter the idols of fanaticism, stubbornness and egotism.¹⁵

6. What is the philosophy of prayers?

In Sūratul ‘Ankabut, verse number 45, mentions an important philosophy with respect to the prayers when it says:

﴿إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ﴾

“Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil.”

Since prayers remind man of two of the most powerful deterrents - the Origin and the Resurrection - it thus possesses a deterring influence with regards to indecency and evil.

A person, who stands up for prayers, recites Allāhu Akbar and regards Allāh to be superior to and greater than everything else. Recollecting His bounties, he praises Him and offers his thanksgiving. He eulogizes Him for His Compassion and Mercy, and brings to mind the Day of Judgment; professing his servitude, he yearns for His help, seeks the Straight Path from Him and implores Him to protect him from treading the path of the deviated ones and those, who earn His anger (the theme of Sūratul Ḥamd).

Undoubtedly, the heart and the soul of such a person shall experience an impulse towards truth, purity and piety.

He goes into rukū‘ for Allāh and places his forehead on the ground in His august presence. Drowned in His grandeur, he shoves his egoism and superiority complex into oblivion.

He testifies to His Unity and the prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

He sends salutations upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ and beseeches Allāh to place him amongst His righteous servants (tashahhud and salām).

¹⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 485

All these acts create within him a tidal wave of spirituality, which is reckoned to be a strong barrier against sins.

This act is repeated several times in a day; when he rises up in the morning he gets immersed in His remembrance; in the middle of the day when he is totally engrossed in the material life he suddenly hears the muezzin calling the people to prayers. Interrupting his schedule he hastens to present himself before Him. Even at the end of the day and before sliding into the relaxing comforts of his bed he engages himself in a communion with his Lord, illuminating his heart with His Light.

In addition to the above, as he engages himself in the preliminaries of the prayers, he washes and cleans himself and keeps away usurped and forbidden things from himself after which he proceeds to present himself before his Friend. All these things effectively serve as a deterrent, preventing him from treading the path of indecency and evil.

But ultimately, every prayer shall only keep one away from evil and indecency in the same measure as the conditions of perfection and the spirit of worship, which it happens to possess. At times it keeps one away from evil, completely and wholly, whereas at other times it does so partially and incompletely.

It is impossible that a person offers his prayers but they do not have any effect on him - however superficial the prayer and however polluted the person. Obviously, the effects of such prayers are less, but had such individuals not been offering these prayers, they might have been in a much more polluted state.

Stating this more clearly, 'refraining from indecency and evil' possesses numerous levels and ranks, and every prayer, depending upon the conditions of the prayers that have been taken into consideration (while offering it), possesses some of these ranks

It has been reported in a tradition that a youth from the Anṣār (Helpers) used to offer his prayers with the Noble Prophet ﷺ, but

despite this, he was prone to committing sins and evil deeds. When this was brought to the notice of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he said:

إِنَّ صَلَاتَهُ تَنْهَاهُ يَوْمًا.

“His prayers deter him for one day (only).”¹⁶

This effect of the prayers is so significant that some of the traditions refer to it as a gauge for distinguishing the accepted prayers from those that are not. As Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ أَ قَبِلَتْ صَلَاتُهُ أَمْ لَمْ تُقْبَلْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ مَنَعَتْهُ صَلَاتُهُ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ فَبَقِدَرِ مَا مَنَعَتْهُ قَبِلَتْ مِنْهُ.

“One, who desires to know if his prayer has been accepted or not, should observe if it has kept him away from indecency and evil, or not; the measure in which it has kept him away (is the measure of his prayer that) has been accepted.”¹⁷

Continuing with the verse, Allāh says:

﴿ وَ لَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ﴾

“The dhikr (remembrance) of Allāh is superior and more virtuous.”

The apparent meaning of the above sentence appears to mention a more important philosophy for the prayers. It mentions another effect of prayers - an effect that is even more important than ‘keeping one away from indecency and evil’ - and that is, it causes man to remember Allāh - this being the basis of every goodness and the foundation of all felicities. In reality, its superiority and importance is due to the fact that it is the cause for it (keeping one away from indecency and evil).

¹⁶ *Majma' al-Bayān*, under the discussion regarding verse 45 of Sūratul ‘Ankabūt.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Basically, remembrance of Allāh keeps the hearts alive and sets them at rest, and no other thing can be likened to it in significance and importance.

﴿أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾

“Surely by Allāh’s remembrance are the hearts set at rest.”¹⁸

Essentially, the soul of every act of worship - whether it is a prayer or something else - is remembrance of Allāh. The preliminary acts of the prayer, the recitations and actions in it, the supplications after the prayers - all of these - serve to revive the remembrance of Allāh within a man’s heart.

Worthy of attention is that an allusion has been made to this fundamental philosophy of prayer in Sūrat Tāhā, when Prophet Mūsā ؑ is addressed as:

﴿اقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي﴾

“And keep up prayer for My remembrance.”¹⁹

In a tradition, Mu’adh b. Jabal states: No deed of man, for protecting him from divine chastisement, is greater than ‘remembrance of Allāh’. When he was asked: Not even Jihād in the way of Allāh? He replied: No (not even Jihād), for Allāh has said:

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

Although the philosophy of prayer is not something that is hidden from anyone, a more careful study of the text of the Qur’an and the traditions guide us towards some more subtle points in this regard:

1. The spirit, foundation, objective, result and ultimately the philosophy of prayers is remembrance of Allāh - the same ذكر الله, which, in the above verse, has been referred to as the optimum

¹⁸ Sūratul Ra’d (13), Verse 28

¹⁹ Sūrat Ṭaha (20), Verse 14

result. However, it should be a remembrance that brings about ‘reflection’, and a ‘reflection’ that leads to ‘deeds’. In a tradition Imam as-Şādiq عليه السلام, interpreting the sentence:

﴿ وَ لَذِكْرِ اللَّهِ الْكَبِيرِ ﴾

said:

ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ مَا أَحَلَّ وَ حَرَّمَ.

“Remembrance of Allāh at the time of performing a lawful or a forbidden act.”²⁰

It means to remember Allāh and seek that which is permitted and refrain from that which is forbidden.

2. Prayers are a means for washing away the sins and achieving divine forgiveness since they invite man towards repentance and rectification of the past. Hence we read in a tradition that once the Noble Prophet ﷺ questioned his companions: If there flowed, at the doorstep of one of your houses, a river with pure and clean water and if the owner happened to wash himself in it five times a day, would there be any dirt or uncleanness on his body? The companions replied: No. The Noble Prophet ﷺ then said: The prayer is similar to this flowing water. Whenever one offers a prayer, the sins committed between two prayers get washed away.²¹

Thus, by means of the balm of prayers, the wounds that get inflicted upon man’s soul as a result of sins get healed and the rust that forms on the heart is eliminated.

3. The prayer is a barrier against future sins. It strengthens the spirit of faith within man and fosters the seedling of Taqwā (piety) within his heart. We know that faith and piety are the strongest barriers against sins and this is exactly what has been referred to in

²⁰ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 82, pg. 200

²¹ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 3, pg. 7 (Chapter 2 from The Chapters (regarding) the number of (obligatory) prayers, tradition 3)

the verse as ‘keeping one away from indecency and evil’. Similarly, we read in numerous traditions, that when the state of affairs of some sinning individuals was brought to the notice of the A’immah عليهم السلام, they said: “Don’t worry! The prayer shall reform them” and it did!

4. The prayer does away with heedlessness and negligence. The greatest tragedy for those journeying the path of truth is that they tend to forget the purpose of their creation and get drowned in the whirlpool of this material world and its ephemeral pleasures. But the prayer- since it is offered at regular intervals and five times a day - repeatedly warns man and causes him to bring to mind the purpose of his creation and reminds him of his place and position in this world. This, in itself, is a great bounty because man has in his possession a device which alerts him strongly, several times in the course of a day.

5. The prayer serves to shatter pride and egotism. In the course of a day, man offers seventeen rak‘at and in each of them he places his forehead on the ground twice before Allāh, considering himself to be a tiny entity before His greatness - rather, a zero in the presence of Infinity. He tears apart the curtains of arrogance and egotism, and shatters his pride and superiority complex.

We can understand why ‘Alī عليه السلام, in that popular tradition in which the philosophy behind the various acts of worship of Islam have been explained, immediately after referring to faith, speaks about prayers and explains:

فَرَضَ اللَّهُ الْإِيمَانَ تَطْهِيراً مِنَ الشِّرْكِ وَالصَّلَاةَ تَنْزِيهاً عَنِ الْكِبْرِ.

“Allāh made faith obligatory in order to purify (the people) of polytheism, and the prayer, in order to clean (them) of pride.”²²

6. The prayer is a tool for the development of moral excellences and attaining spiritual perfection. It hauls man out of the limited

²² *Nahj al-Balāgha*, saying 252

confines of this material world, invites him towards the spiritual realms and places him in the company of the angels. Man, without sensing the need for any intermediary, observes himself in the presence of his Lord and engages in communicating with Him.

The repetition of this act several times in a day with special emphasis on the attributes of Allāh - His Compassion, Mercy and Greatness - especially by way of reciting the various chapters of the Qur'an after Sūratul Ḥamd, which itself is one of the best inviters towards good actions and pure deeds, has an appreciable effect in the development of moral excellences within man.

The Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام, mentioning the philosophy of the prayers, said:

الصَّلَاةُ قُرْبَانٌ كُلِّ تَقِيٍّ.

“The prayer is a means for the pious ones to attain nearness to Allāh.”²³

7. The prayer imparts value and significance to the other deeds of man, since it revives the spirit of sincerity within man. This is because the prayer is a collection of sincere intentions, pure speech and genuine deeds, and a daily repetition of these aspects sows the seeds of other good acts within the soul of man and strengthens the spirit of sincerity within him.

We find that the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام, in his testament after being fatally injured on the head by the accursed b. Muljim, said:

اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَإِنَّهَا عَمُودُ دِينِكُمْ.

“Fear Allāh so far as the prayers are concerned for they are the pillars of your religion.”²⁴

²³ Ibid., saying 136

²⁴ Ibid., letter 47

We know that when the pillars of a tent break down, the ropes and nails that are around it - however strong they may be - are of no use, Similarly, when the connection between the servant and Allāh, which is established by means of prayers, were to get severed the other deeds too would lose their effect.

In a tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

أَوَّلُ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ الصَّلَاةَ فَإِنْ قَبِلَتْ قَبِلَ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ وَإِنْ رُدَّتْ
رُدَّ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ.

“The first thing that a servant shall be reckoned for (on the Day of Judgment) shall be his prayers. If they are accepted, all his other deeds shall be accepted too and if they are rejected, the other deeds shall be rejected too!”

Perhaps, the reason for the above could be that the prayer is the key towards establishing a connection between the Creator and the creation, and if offered correctly, would generate within him sincerity and the intention of attaining nearness to Allāh – the two factors that are the means for the acceptance of deeds. But if not, then all his other deeds become tainted, and thus drop from reckoning.

8. The prayer, (not taking into account its contents, for the present) in the light of the conditions necessary for its correctness, invites towards purifying one’s life. It is evident from the requirement that the place where the prayers are offered, the clothes of the person offering the prayers, the carpet upon which the prayers are offered and the water and the place utilized for performing Wuḍū or ghusl should not be usurped or obtained as a result of trampling the rights of others. How can one, who is polluted of transgression, injustice, usury, usurpation, selling short of weight, taking bribes and earning wrongful income, manage to fulfil the preliminary conditions of the prayers? Thus, repetition of prayers, five times a day, is itself an

exhortation towards exhibiting consideration with respect to the rights of others.

9. In addition to the ‘conditions for correctness’, the prayers also have ‘conditions for acceptance’ which, in other words, are referred to as ‘conditions for perfection’; these, if taken into consideration, also act as an effective factor in abandoning many sins.

Books of jurisprudence and traditions mention numerous things that act as impediments towards the acceptance of prayers - one of them being consumption of intoxicants. It has been reported in the traditions that:

لَا تُقْبَلُ صَلَاةُ شَارِبِ الْخَمْرِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتُوبَ.

“The prayers of one who consumes intoxicants, shall not be accepted for forty days, except if he repents.”²⁵

In several traditions we read that an unjust and oppressive leader is one of those persons, whose prayers are not accepted.²⁶ Some of the traditions explicitly state that the prayers of one, who does not pay the zakāt, are not accepted; other traditions state that unlawful food, vanity and egotism are of the impediments that prevent one’s prayers from being accepted. The extent of the constructive effect of endeavouring to fulfil these ‘conditions of acceptance’ is only too plain and obvious!

10. Prayers strengthen the spirit of discipline within man since they have to be offered at specific times - any advancement or deferment of which would only serve to render them invalid. Similarly, there also exist rulings with respect to intention, qiyām²⁷, qu‘ūd²⁸, ruku‘, sujūd and the like, which, if taken into consideration, instill within man a sense of discipline, thereby enabling him to include this factor in the other affairs of his life, with absolute and total ease.

²⁵ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 84, pg. 317 & 320

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 84, pg. 318

²⁷ Standing in Ṣalāt. (Tr.)

²⁸ Sitting in Ṣalāt. (Tr.)

All the above are the merits that exist in individual prayers without taking into account the issue of congregation, for if we are to consider the merits of praying in congregation – which is, in reality, the soul of the prayers – there would be innumerable additional benefits, explanation of which falls beyond the scope of this book but which are more or less known to us.

We conclude this discussion on the philosophy and secrets of prayers by presenting a comprehensive tradition, reported from Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام.

The Imam عليه السلام, replying to a letter in which he was asked about the philosophy of prayers, stated: “The prayers have been legislated for acknowledging and attesting the Lordship of the Lord, combating polytheism and idolatry, standing in His presence with utmost humility and modesty, confessing to one’s sins, seeking forgiveness for the past disobediences and placing the forehead on the ground, everyday, for the purpose of glorifying and venerating Him.

It is also intended that man always remains alert, his heart does not get clouded by the dust of forgetfulness, he does not become arrogant and heedless, but instead humble and submissive, and becomes more desirous of worldly and religious bounties.

In addition to this, the regular remembrance of Allāh throughout the day, achieved as a result of prayers, causes man not to become forgetful and heedless of his Lord, Sustainer and Creator, and he is not overcome by the spirit of rebelliousness. It is this attention towards Allāh and standing in His presence that restrains man from disobedience and prevents corruption and depravity.”^{29 and 30}

7. Why should we offer prayers at prescribed times?

Some people say: “We do not deny the philosophy behind the prayers and nor do we refute its importance or its educative effects, but what is the need for it to be offered at prescribed times? Would

²⁹ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 3, pg. 4

³⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 16, pg. 284

it not be better if the people were left free - each one to perform this obligation as per his leisure and opportunity, and his mental and spiritual preparedness?”

Experience shows that if educative issues are not regulated by means of strict discipline and stipulations, many individuals tend to become forgetful of them and their very foundation becomes shaky and unstable. Such issues ought to be governed by means of strict discipline and specific timings so that no one possesses any excuse for abandoning them. It is particularly so in view of the fact that the performance of these acts at prescribed times and more especially, when performed in a congregation, possesses grandeur, magnificence and effect, which cannot be denied. They are actually a huge lesson for human development.³¹

³¹ Ibid., vol. 4, pg. 105

FASTING

8. What is the philosophy of fasting?

There are various aspects associated with fasts and they also possess numerous physical and spiritual benefits. These tend to have a great impact upon man - the most important of them being their ethical aspect and their educative philosophy.

Some of their important benefits are that they make man's soul kind, strengthen his determination and moderate his instincts.

When an individual fasts, despite his hunger and thirst, he must stay away from food, water and sexual pleasures and prove practically that he is not an animal within a stable, but an entity that can rein in his wild soul and overcome his lust and carnal desires.

In fact, the most important philosophy of fasting is this spiritual effect; man, who has a variety of food and drinks at his disposal and can reach out for them the moment he experiences thirst or hunger, is like the trees that grow near the rivers, seeking support of the walls of the gardens. These fondled and pampered trees possess less resistance and are short-lived. If water does not reach them for a few days they immediately dry up and wither away. In contrast, the trees which grow between the rocks on the mountains or in the deserts and which are pampered from their incipience by strong storms, scorching rays of the sun and harsh winters, and are deprived of luxuries, are strong, durable and highly resistant!

Fasts act in a similar way with man's soul, granting it - in exchange for temporary restrictions - a strong determination, steadfastness, and the ability to face up to hardships and severe occurrences. Since it controls the unruly instincts, it makes man's heart pure and luminous.

In short, fasts heave man out of the world of animals and elevate him into the realm of angels, and the expression:

﴿لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

“...so that you may guard (against evil).” in verse 183 of Sūratul Baqarah³², while mentioning the philosophy behind the fasts, also bears an allusion to all of the above realities.

The well-known tradition:

الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ مِنَ النَّارِ.

“The fast is a shield against the fire (of Hell)”³³ is also a reference to this issue.

In another tradition from Imam ‘Alī عليه السلام we read that some companions asked the Noble Prophet ﷺ: “What should we do to keep the Satan away from us?” He ﷺ replied: “Fasting blackens the face of the Satan; charity in the way of Allāh breaks his back; befriending someone for the sake of Allāh and persevering in performing good deeds cuts his roots and seeking forgiveness severs the vein of his heart.”³⁴

In Nahjul Balāgha, while explaining the philosophy of the various acts of worship, the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام, says regarding fasting:

وَ الصِّيَامَ ابْتِلَاءً لِإِخْلَاصِ الْخَلْقِ.

“Allāh ordered the observance of fasts for fostering (the attribute of) sincerity within the people.”³⁵

In another tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we read:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (Tr.)

³³ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, Verse 256

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 255

³⁵ *Nahj al-Balāgha*, saying 252

إِنَّ لِلْحَنَّةِ بَابًا يُدْعَى الرَّيَّانَ لَا يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ إِلَّا الصَّائِمُونَ.

“Paradise has a door by the name of ‘Rayyān’ (the sated one) and none shall enter Paradise through it except those who fast.”

The late Sheikh Ṣadūq, explaining this tradition in his book *Ma‘ānī al-Akhbār*, says: “The reason for selecting this particular name for this door of Paradise is that the maximum inconvenience suffered by people who fast is caused by thirst; when they pass through this door, they shall be quenched in a manner that they shall never experience any thirst ever again.”³⁶

THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF FASTING

The social effects of fasts are evident. Fasts impart the message of equality amongst the individuals of the society. By acting upon this religious obligation the affluent ones not only get first hand experience of the hunger of the hungry and the impoverished ones of society, but economizing on their daily food also serves to benefit them.

Yes, it is possible to draw the attention of the affluent ones towards the state of the hungry and the deprived ones by describing their conditions to them, but if this aspect were to be experienced physically, the effects would be all the more noticeable. The fasts provide a personal experience to this important social issue. It is for this reason that it has been narrated that when Hishām b. Ḥakam sought to know the reason for the legislation of fasting, Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام replied: “Fasting has been made obligatory in order to establish equality between the rich and the poor; the rich experience the pangs of hunger and thus fulfil their obligations with respect to the poor. Usually, the rich can attain whatever they covet; Allāh desires that there exists equality between His servants

³⁶ *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, pg. 252

thereby making the rich experience hunger, pain and trouble so that they may exhibit mercy upon the hungry and the destitute.”³⁷

If the wealthy nations of the world were to fast for just a few days in the year and experience the pangs of hunger, would there still exist any hungry people in the world?

THE MEDICAL AND CURING EFFECTS OF FASTING

The miraculous effect of abstinence (from food) in curing various diseases has been established in modern as well as ancient medicine. It is a fact which just cannot be denied and one would be hard pressed to find a doctor who does not refer to this fact in the course of his writings. We all know that the cause of a great number of diseases is extravagance in the consumption of various types of food. This is because the unabsorbed components either accumulate in the form of obtrusive fat particles at various locations within the body, or remain within the blood stream as fat and surplus sugar. These superfluous components, between the muscles of the body, are in fact the perfect breeding grounds for microbes and infectious diseases. In this state, the best way to combat these diseases is to do away with these breeding grounds by means of abstinence (from food) and fasting! Fasting burns away the refuse and thus cleanses the body.

In addition, it also provides a noticeable and vital respite to the digestive system and serves as an effective factor in tuning-up this process, especially in the light of the fact that this structure is the most sensitive of all the systems of the body and one which is in a state of continuous operation all throughout the year.

It is clear that, as taught by Islam, the one who fasts should not exhibit extravagance in consuming food during sahar³⁸ and ifṭār³⁹,

³⁷ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 7, the first chapter of The Book of Fasts, pg. 3

³⁸ The time before beginning the fast. (Tr.)

³⁹ The time of breaking the fast. (Tr.)

in order that he derives the maximum benefit medically, otherwise, it is possible that the results might have a negative effect.

Alexis Sophorin, the Russian scientist, writes in his book: “Treatment by means of fasting possesses special benefits and is useful for curing anaemia, weakness of the intestines, acute and chronic inflammation, internal and external abscesses, tuberculosis, sclerosis, rheumatism, gout, dropsy, sciatica, (peeling of the skin), diseases of the eyes, sugar disorders, skin diseases, kidney and liver problems, and other diseases.”

The abovementioned diseases are not the only ones that can be treated by means of abstinence of food, rather diseases that are associated with the very foundation of the body and are intertwined with its very cells, such as cancer, syphilis, tuberculosis and plague can also be treated by this means.⁴⁰

In a well-known tradition, the Noble Prophet ﷺ says:

تَصُومُوا تَصِحُّوا.

“Fast, in order that you become healthy.”⁴¹

In another well-known tradition, he ﷺ says:

الْمَعْدَةُ بَيْتُ كُلِّ دَاءٍ وَالْحَمِيَّةُ رَأْسُ كُلِّ دَوَاءٍ.

“The stomach is the house of all maladies and abstinence (from food) is the best of all cures.”^{42 and 43}

⁴⁰ Ruzeh: Rawish-e-Nuween Baraai Darmaan-e-Bimaarihaa, pg. 65 (First edition)

⁴¹ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 96, pg. 255

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 14

⁴³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 628

KHUMS

9. Is allocation of one half of Khums for the Bani Hāshim not favouritism?

Some people are of the impression that this Islamic tax, which covers twenty percent of most wealth and one half of which has been apportioned for the sādāt⁴⁴, is a kind of familial distinction and smells of nepotism and favouritism - an aspect that is incongruous with the universal nature of Islam and it's spirit of social justice.

Those who harbour such views have not studied the conditions and specifics of this ruling completely, for the answer to this objection, in it's entirety, lies in them.

Firstly, one half of the khums associated with the descendants of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Banī Hāshim must be given exclusively to the impoverished ones from amongst them and that too, only in the measure sufficient to fulfil their needs for one year (not more)! Thus, the only ones who can utilize it are those, who are either sick and cannot work, or infant orphans and those who, due to certain reasons, cannot make both ends meet.

Therefore, those who are capable of working (in actuality or in potential) and are able to procure an earning, sufficient for leading their lives, do not have the right to make use of this portion of the khums. It follows that the commonly held view among the general masses that the descendants of the Noble Prophet ﷺ can utilize khums, however well off they might be, is improper and totally baseless and unfounded.

Secondly, the impoverished and the underprivileged ones from amongst the sādāt and the Banī Hāshim do not have the right to use zakāt; instead they can only utilize this portion of khums.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Descendants of the noble Prophet ﷺ (Tr.)

⁴⁵ The fact that the Banī Hāshim have been forbidden from taking the Zakāt is incontrovertible and this is an issue, which has been mentioned in numerous books of tradition and jurisprudence. Is it possible for us to believe that while

Thirdly, if the share of the sādāt, which is one half of the khums, happens to exceed the needs of the sādāt actually present, this surplus should be put into the public treasury to be put to other uses. On the contrary, if that portion is insufficient to fulfil their requirements then they must be provided for, either from the public treasury or from the zakāt.

In view of the above three points it is quite clear that no differentiation has been exhibited between the sādāt and the non-sādāt, materially.

The needy non-sādāt can procure their yearly expenses from zakāt but are deprived of khums, whereas the indigent sādāt can procure theirs from khums but, in turn, remain deprived from zakāt.

In fact, there exist two coffers; the ‘coffer of khums’ and the ‘coffer of zakāt’. Each of these two groups has the right to utilize the contents of only one of these two coffers, and that too, equally – that is, one year’s requirements only.

But those people who have not reflected over these conditions and details, are given to imagine that the sādāt have been allotted a greater share from the public treasury or that they enjoy a special distinction.

The only question that looms up here is that if there is no difference between the two, as far as the outcome is concerned, what is the benefit of such a classification?

The answer to this can be comprehended by taking one important point into consideration and that is, there exists an important fundamental difference between khums and zakāt; zakāt is considered to be of the taxes that are regarded as part of the general funds of the Islamic society and hence it is essentially utilized in this sector, whereas khums is of the taxes appertaining to the Islamic

Islam has made arrangements for the orphans and the incapable and impoverished ones of the non-Banī Hāshim, it has left the Banī Hāshim without any security - unattended and unlooked after?

Government - that is, the expenses of the Islamic Government and its functionaries are paid from it.

Thus, keeping the *sādāt* deprived of the general funds (*zakāt*) is in fact with the objective of keeping the relatives of the Noble Prophet ﷺ away from these funds. Otherwise, the Noble Prophet ﷺ⁴⁶ would be accused of placing his relatives in control of the general funds.

But on the other hand, as the needy and the impoverished *sādāt* do need to be looked after too, it has been stipulated in the Islamic Laws that they would be supported from the funds of the Islamic Government and not from the general funds.

Thus, in reality, not only is *khums* not a distinction for the *sādāt*, but on the contrary, it is a means to sideline them in view of the general interest and to prevent the arousal of any kind of suspicion and mistrust.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ And if we notice that some of the traditions state:

كَرَامَةٌ لَهُمْ عَنْ أَوْسَاخِ النَّاسِ.

The objective is to keep the *sādāt* away from *Zakāt*, since it is reckoned to be a kind of filth of the people's wealth) it is for the purpose of appeasing and placating the Banī Hāshim over this prohibition (of utilizing the *Zakāt*) and also for explaining to the people that they should desist from being a burden upon the public treasury, unless absolutely necessary, and leave the *Zakāt* for those, who are seriously in need of it.

⁴⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 181

ZAKĀT

10. What is the philosophy behind (the payment) of Zakāt?

It is obvious for three reasons that the role of the public treasury and zakāt (which is one of the sources of income for it), is of extreme importance. Firstly, Islam did not manifest itself as an ethical, philosophical or theological doctrine but rather, came forth as a comprehensive religion that catered for all the material and spiritual needs of the people. Secondly, Islam, from its very onset during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, had always been associated with the establishment of a government, and thirdly, Islam pays special attention to supporting the underprivileged ones and combating class difference in the society.

Without any doubt, every society has its share of people who are incapacitated, diseased, handicapped, orphans without guardians and the like, who need to be cared and looked after.

In addition, in order to protect the society from the evil intentions of enemies it is in need of an army, whose expenses are covered by the government. Similarly, there is also the need for funds to be allocated for the employees of the Islamic government, judges, religious centres and, advertising and promotional equipments, which cannot be organized and regulated without an assured and disciplined monetary support.

For this reason, the issue of zakāt, which in reality is regarded as a kind of ‘tax on income and production’ and ‘tax on stagnant wealth’, acquires great significance in Islam, to the extent that it is even placed at par with the most important acts of worship - on numerous occasions it has been mentioned together with the prayers and has even been regarded as a condition for the acceptance of the prayers!

We even read in the Islamic traditions that if an Islamic government seeks zakāt from some individuals and they stand up against the government and refuse to pay it, they shall be regarded as

apostates. Furthermore, in spite of repeated counselling, they refuse to back down from their stubborn stance, it is permissible to use military force against them. The incident of the People of Raddah is well known in Islamic history. It is about a group of people who refused to pay their zakāt after the demise of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, whereupon the Caliph of the time initiated a military campaign against them. Even Imam ‘Alī ؑ had endorsed this expedition and had been one of the commanders on the battle-field.

In a tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ states:

مَنْ مَنَعَ قَيْرَاطًا مِنَ الزَّكَاةِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُسْلِمٍ وَلَا كَرَامَةً.

“One, who withholds (even) one carat of zakāt, is neither a Mu’min nor a Muslim and possesses no esteem and value!”⁴⁸

Interestingly, it can be concluded from the traditions that the measure of zakāt has been so meticulously evaluated in Islam that if all the Muslims were to pay their zakāt completely and correctly, not a single poor and destitute person would exist in the entire Islamic nation!

Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ says: If all the people were to pay the zakāt of their wealth, not a single Muslim would be left indigent and needy. People do not turn needy, destitute, hungry and bare except due to the transgressions of the affluent ones!⁴⁹

From the traditions it can also be deduced that payment of zakāt becomes a reason for the protection of proprietorship and strengthening of its foundation, such that should the people become heedless of this important Islamic principle, divisions and schisms would erupt amongst the groups in such a great measure that even the properties of the affluent ones would fall in jeopardy.

It has been narrated that Imam Mūsā b. Ja’far ؑ said:

⁴⁸ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 6, pg. 20, Chapter 4, no. 9

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pg. 4 (Chapter 1 of the Chapters of Zakāt, no. 6)

حَصِّنُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِالزَّكَاةِ.

“Protect your possessions by means of zakāt.”⁵⁰

The above meaning has also been conveyed in other traditions that have been reported from the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid., vol. 6, pg. 6 (no. 11)

⁵¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 8, pg. 10

ḤAJJ

11. What is the secret and philosophy of Ḥajj?

There are four dimensions associated with this great act of worship - each one more deep-rooted and beneficial than the other.

1. The Ethical Dimension

The most important philosophy of Ḥajj is the ethical transformation which it induces within man. The ritual of 'iḥrām' entirely removes man from material ostentations, external distinctions, extravagant clothing and ornaments. By prohibiting pleasures and engaging him in self-rectification - one of the duties of a 'muḥrim'⁵², it distances him from the material world and engrosses him in a world of light, purity and spirituality. Consequently, it causes those who, in ordinary circumstances, find themselves weighed down by the burden of make-believe distinctions, ranks and honours, to suddenly feel light, easy and relaxed.

Subsequently, the performance of the other rituals of Ḥajj, one after the other, continually brings man closer to his Lord, strengthens his spiritual connection with Him, distances him from his gloomy and sinful past, and guides him towards a bright, luminous and pure future.

Every step of the Ḥajj-rituals is reminiscent of the events associated with Ibrāhīm ؑ, Ismā'īl ؑ and his mother Hājar ؑ, and personifies before man their self-sacrifice, altruism and struggle (in the path of Allāh). The city of Makkah in general, and the Masjidul Ḥarām, the Ka'bah and the place of circumambulation in particular, bring to mind the memories of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the holy Imams ؑ and the struggle of the Muslims during the period of early Islam. As a result, this ethical transformation tends to be deeper and more profound such that in every corner of Masjidul Ḥarām and the city of Makkah, man visualizes the faces of the Noble

⁵² One who has worn the iḥrām. (Tr.)

Prophet ﷺ, ‘Alī ؑ and the other holy Imams ؑ, and hears the enthusiastic slogans of their mission.

Indeed, all these together pave the way for an ethical revolution within hearts that are receptive and in a manner that is indescribable, and causes man to turn over a new leaf and opens up a new chapter in his life. It is not without reason that we read in our traditions that one, who performs Ḥajj, completely and perfectly...

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ كَهَيْئَتِهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.

“Becomes free of sins just as he was on the day when his mother gave him birth.”⁵³

Truly, Ḥajj is a second birth for the Muslims - a birth which is the beginning of a new human life.

It is needless to mention that these effects and benefits, and those that we shall mention later, are neither for those who only content themselves with its exterior leaving aside its core, nor for those, who only view it as a means for recreation, tourism, pretension, dissemblance and acquiring personal material items - never acquainting themselves with its spirit and essence. Their share would only be that which they had set out to achieve!

2. The Political Dimension

As has been stated by one of the renowned Islamic jurists, the Ḥajj rituals, apart from putting on display the most sincere and profound acts of worship, are also the most effective means for advancing the political objectives of Islam.

The essence of worship is attention towards Allāh, while the essence of politics is attention towards the ‘creation of Allāh’ - and these two aspects are observed to be as closely intertwined in Ḥajj as the yarns in a fabric!

⁵³ *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 99, pg. 26

Ḥajj is an effective factor in establishing unity amongst the ranks of the Muslims.

Ḥajj is an instrument to combat nationalistic and racial fanaticism, and oppose confinement (of the Muslims) within their geographical boundaries.

Ḥajj is a means for eliminating the shackles of censorship and breaking the stranglehold of the oppressive leaderships prevalent in the Islamic nations.

Ḥajj is a tool for transferring news of political affairs of the Islamic nations from one corner of the globe to another, and finally, it is an effective means for breaking the fetters of captivity and colonialism, and liberating the Muslims.

Consequently, during the period when oppressive tyrants like those belonging to the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsīd dynasties ruled over the Islamic regions and kept every kind of interaction between the various segments of the Muslims under close scrutiny in order to crush any kind of liberty-seeking uprising, the advent of the season of Ḥajj was an opening towards freedom, interaction between various segments of the great Islamic society and discussion of various political issues.

One can see why the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ, expounding the philosophy that lay behind every act of worship in connection with Ḥajj, states:

أَلْحَجَّ تَقْوِيَةً لِلدِّينِ.

“Allāh has ordained (the rituals of) Ḥajj for the purpose of strengthening the religion.”⁵⁴

Again, it is not without reason that an eminent non-Muslim statesman has stated: Woe unto the Muslims if they do not perceive

⁵⁴ *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Saying 252

the meaning (and significance) of Ḥajj and woe unto their enemies if they (the Muslims) ever happen to perceive it.

Even in the Islamic traditions Ḥajj has been regarded as the Jihād of the feeble ones. It is a Jihād in which even the old and weak men and women can join and have a contribution in exhibiting the greatness and grandeur of the Islamic ummah. By standing in circles around the holy Ka'bah and attesting to Allāh's unity and greatness, they cause the hearts of the enemies of Islam to palpitate in trepidation.

3. The Cultural Dimension

The interaction between the various segments of the Islamic society during the season of Ḥajj can turn out to be the most effective factor for cultural exchanges and transfer of thoughts and ideas. This is especially so because the grand gathering of Ḥajj is in reality, a true and natural representation of all the segments of the Muslims of the world (as there is no forced, forged or artificial factor involved in the selection of those proceeding for Ḥajj. The pilgrims are individuals who come from all segments, races and languages associated with the Muslims all over the world, who have gathered under one roof). Thus we read in the traditions: One of the benefits of Ḥajj is the spread of the traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ throughout the entire Islamic world.

Hishām b. Ḥakam, one of the learned companions of Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: I questioned the Imam عليه السلام about the philosophy that lay behind the performance of Ḥajj and the circumambulation of the Ka'bah whereupon he عليه السلام replied: "Allāh created the servants ... and for the welfare of their worldly and religious affairs, He sent down His commandments for them - one of them being the congregation of the people from the East and the West (for the Ḥajj rituals). This, in order that the Muslims become acquainted with one another, become aware of the states of each other, and (so that) every group transfers its business investments from one city to another ... and in order that the memories and traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ

become known, and the people bring them to mind and do not forget them.”⁵⁵

It was on this basis that the Muslims, during the suffocating eras in which the tyrannical caliphs and rulers had prohibited them from spreading these rulings, made use of this opportunity (of Ḥajj) to interact with the Imams عليه السلام and eminent religious scholars for solving their problems, understanding the rulings of Islam and comprehending the traditions and customs of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

On the other hand, Ḥajj possesses the ability to be transformed into a gigantic cultural assembly in which scholars and intellectuals of the Islamic world, come together for a few days in Makkah, propounding their thoughts and exhibiting their creativity before the others.

Essentially, one of the great catastrophes is that the boundaries between the Islamic nations become the cause for them to separate from each other, culturally. As a consequence, Muslims of each nation only reflect upon their own selves and their own state of affairs, and this is something that effectively works towards dismembering and dissecting the single Islamic society; indeed, Ḥajj has the ability to stem this evil outcome.

How beautifully has Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام stated in that tradition of Hishām b. Ḥakam when he said: “If all the people were to be concerned only about their respective countries and the problems existing therein, all of them would suffer destruction, their countries would face ruination, their benefits and welfare would be lost, and realities would become obscured and concealed.”

4. The Financial Dimension

Contrary to what some people imagine, utilizing the great assembly of Ḥajj for strengthening the financial foundations of the Islamic nations is not inconsistent with the spirit of Ḥajj. Instead, according to the Islamic traditions, it constitutes one of the philosophies for it.

⁵⁵ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 8, pg. 9

What harm is there if the Muslims in that great gathering, were to lay the foundations of a common and associated Islamic market, and pave the way for commercial transactions amongst themselves in a manner in which neither do their profits enter the pockets of their enemies nor does their economy become dependent upon the others? An act of this type would not be called ‘craving for the world’ but rather, it would constitute an act of worship and Jihād (in the way of Allāh).

In that tradition of Hishām b. Ḥakam from Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, an express reference has been made towards this aspect that one of the objectives of Ḥajj is strengthening the commerce of the Muslims and facilitating economic association and cooperation amongst them.

In another tradition, Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, interpreting the verse...

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ﴾

“There is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord.”⁵⁶

... says: The meaning of this verse is ‘seeking livelihood’.

إِذَا أَحَلَّ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ إِحْرَامِهِ وَ قَضَى فَلْيَشْتَرِ وَ لْيَبِيعْ فِي الْمَوْسِمِ.

“And when a person comes out of his ihṛām and completes the Ḥajj, he should conduct business transactions during the season of Ḥajj (for instead of being a sin it carries rewards.)”⁵⁷

This meaning is also witnessed in a tradition⁵⁸ from Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام which explicitly enumerates the philosophies and objectives underlying the rites of Ḥajj; in the tradition, the Imam عليه السلام recites the following verse of the Noble Qur’an:

⁵⁶ *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 198

⁵⁷ *Tafsīr ‘Ayyāshī*, as stated by *Tafsīr al-Mīzān*, vol. 2, pg. 86

⁵⁸ *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 99, pg. 32

﴿لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ﴾

“That they may witness advantages for them”⁵⁹, a reference to the fact that the verse alludes to the spiritual benefits as well as the material ones - although both of them, from one perspective, can be looked upon as being spiritual in nature.

In short, if this great worship were to be utilized correctly and perfectly, and the pilgrims of the House of Allāh, at a time when they are active and their hearts are emotionally ready in that holy land, were to make use of this great opportunity for solving the various problems that plague the Islamic society by establishing various political, cultural and mercantile assemblies, it would surely serve to untie the knots and solve the problems. Perhaps this is why Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said:

لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ قَائِمًا مَا قَامَتِ الْكَعْبَةُ.

“The religion shall continue to stand as long as the Ka’bah continues to do so.”⁶⁰

Imam ‘Alī عليه السلام too has said:

اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي بَيْتِ رَبِّكُمْ فَلَا يَخْلُو مِنْكُمْ مَا بَقِيْتُمْ فَإِنَّهُ إِنْ تَرِكَ لَمْ تُنَاطِرُوا.

“Fear Allāh in the matter of His House (Ka’bah)! Do not desert it for if it is deserted, divine reprieve shall be taken away from you.”⁶¹

In view of the immense significance of the above issue, in the Islamic sources of traditions a separate chapter has been devoted to the ruling that if it were to ever happen that in a particular year the Muslims decide to refrain from going for Ḥajj, it would become

⁵⁹ *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 28 (Tr.)

⁶⁰ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 8, pg. 14

⁶¹ *Nahj al-Balāgha*, letter 47

obligatory upon the Islamic government to send them to Makkah by means of force!^{62 and 63}

Ḥajj - An Important Worship for Human Development

The journey for Ḥajj is a divine one and, in reality, a great migration; an expansive field for self-development, self-rectification and the Greatest Battle (Jihād-e-Akbar).

The Ḥajj rituals collectively are an act of worship profoundly associated with the struggle of Ibrāhīm ؑ his son Ismā'īl ؑ and his wife Hājar and if we were to remain heedless of this aspect while studying the secrets and objectives of Ḥajj, many of its rites and rituals would only float before us as enigmas; the solution to this lies in keeping this deep association within our sights during the course of the study.

When we come to the sacrificial grounds in Mina, the innumerable sacrifices performed there leave us amazed and perplexed; basically, is it possible for animal-sacrifice to be a part of the rituals associated with an act of worship?

But when we bring to mind the incident of Ibrāhīm ؑ when he sincerely endeavoured to sacrifice his nearest and dearest one in the path of Allāh subsequent to which the sacrifice at Mina came into existence in the form of a custom, we comprehend the philosophy lying behind it.

Offering sacrifice, in reality, implies one's total disregard for everything else when striving in the way of Allāh and is a demonstration of cleansing one's heart from everything other than Allāh. The reformative and educative effects of these rites can be derived in sufficient measure only when the entire scenario of the sacrifice of Ismā'īl ؑ and the spiritual state of the father and the

⁶² *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 8, pg. 15 (The Chapter of 'Obligation Upon The Governor To Compel The People For Ḥajj')

⁶³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 76

son leading up to the sacrifice is incarnated before man's eyes and this spiritual state casts its influence upon him.⁶⁴

When we proceed towards Jamarāt (three stone pillars, which the pilgrims strike with pebbles - each one to be struck with seven pebbles - in a special ritual of Ḥajj), the rituals there appear enigmatic and inexplicable to us and we are given to wonder as to what could be the idea behind stoning a lifeless stone pillar and what problem could such an act possibly solve?

However, when we bring to mind the struggle of Ibrāhīm ؑ - the champion of monotheism - against the whisperings of the Satan, who appeared before him on three occasions - each time seeking to weaken his resolve and distract him from the Jihād-e-Akbar (The Greatest Battle) - and on each occasion Ibrāhīm ؑ repelled him by means of stones, these rites appear more meaningful and comprehensible to us.

These rituals convey the meaning that: Throughout your lives, all of you too, are in confrontation with the whisperings of the Satans during the Jihād-e-Akbar (Greatest Battle), and until you do not stone them and drive them away, you shall never be victorious. If you desire that Allāh, just as He had sent His salutations upon Ibrāhīm ؑ and made his name and doctrine eternal, should also cast His look of grace and favour upon you, then you must follow his ؑ path too.

When we arrive at Şafā and Marwah where we observe the people repeatedly moving to and fro between one small mountain and another even smaller one without getting anything - at times walking and at times running - we are surely overtaken by astonishment as to what kind of ritual this is and what could it possibly mean and signify.

⁶⁴ Unfortunately, of late, the sacrificial rites have come to acquire an undesirable form and the Islamic scholars must strive to rectify it.

But then, when we bring to mind the efforts of Hājar for saving the life of her suckling child in that hot and scorching desert, and how Allāh, after her sincere efforts, granted her wish by making the water of Zamzam to flow from beneath the foot of her new-born child, the clock suddenly turns back for us, the curtains tend to get lifted and we find ourselves near Hājar, accompanying her in her quest and efforts. In the path of Allāh, one cannot hope to attain any rank and status without exertion and effort!

From what we have presented above, it can be easily concluded that Ḥajj should be taught in this manner; the memories of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام his son and his wife should be personified step by step so that not only is the philosophy of Ḥajj perceived and comprehended, but also its profound ethical effects illuminate and influence the souls of the pilgrims - for without these effects the entire Ḥajj is nothing but a mere façade.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 19, pg. 125

JIHĀD

12. What purpose does Islam seek to achieve by Jihād? What is the need for the 'Initiating Jihād'?

The Islamic Jihād can be classified into three categories.

1 – The 'Initiating' and 'Liberating' Jihād

Allāh has prescribed a set of orders and chalked out programmes for the development, freedom, comfort, happiness and prosperity of man, and has entrusted unto His prophets the responsibility of communicating these to the people. Now, if an individual or a group of individuals regard the communication of these orders detrimental to their personal lowly interests and endeavour to obstruct the prophets in fulfilling their divine responsibilities, the prophets possess the right to remove the obstructions lying in their path, initially by utilizing peaceful means and if not possible, then by use of force, in order to acquire for themselves the freedom to propagate (the commandments of Allāh).

In other words, in every society, people have the right to listen to those who invite them towards the path of Truth, and possess freedom to accept their invitation. But if some individuals deprive them of their legitimate right and inhibit them from hearing the truth and becoming freed from their mental and social captivity and slavery, the followers of these divine programmes possess the right to utilize every means at their disposal in order to achieve this freedom. It is here that the necessity of the Initiating Jihād in Islam and other divine religions becomes manifest.

Similarly, if some individuals were to compel the believers to revert to their original religion, every means could be employed for repelling such compulsions too.

2 – The 'Defensive' Jihād

At times it so happens that a battle is imposed upon an individual or a group such that they find themselves as the object of a calculated and/or a surprise attack. In such an instance, all divine and man-

made laws permit the persons attacked to defend themselves and employ every available means to protect themselves. This kind of Jihād is referred to as the defensive Jihād; the battles of Aḥzāb, Uhud, Mūtah, Tabūk, Hunain and some other Islamic battles are examples of this category of Jihād which were defensive in nature.

3 – Jihād for the ‘Eradication Of Polytheism And Idolatry’

Although Islam invites the people to select this religion - the last and the most exalted of all religions - nonetheless, it also respects the freedom of belief and it is for this reason that it grants the communities, which possess divine books, sufficient opportunity so that, after study and reflection, they may accept the religion of Islam. But if they do not do so it looks upon them as a confederate and by placing some specific conditions, which are neither intricate nor difficult, endeavours to have a peaceful co-existence with them.

However, the issue of polytheism is different since it is neither a religion nor a doctrine and so it cannot be looked upon with respect and esteem - rather, it is a kind of superstition, deviation and foolishness. In reality, it is a kind of mental and moral sickness, which ought to be uprooted.

The use of the terms ‘freedom’ and ‘respect’, in connection with the views of others, is applicable if the views or the beliefs are at least based upon a foundation. However, deviation, superstition and sickness are not something that can be treated as respectable, and it is due to this that Islam has ordered idolatry to be uprooted from the human society, even at the cost of warfare; if idol temples and their evil influences cannot be brought down and destroyed by peaceful means, then they should be uprooted by means of force.⁶⁶

From what has been mentioned above, the answer to the venomous propaganda of the Church becomes plainly evident since a sentence more explicit than:

⁶⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 15

﴿ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ﴾

“There is no compulsion in (acceptance) of the religion.”

which appears in the Qur’an, cannot be found in this regard.

Of course, for the purpose of distortion, these people focus their attention upon the battles of Islam; however, a study of these battles clearly reveal that while some of these were purely defensive in nature, others - that belonged to the category of initiating Jihād - were not initiated with the objective of conquering lands and forcing the people into the religion of Islam but instead, for overturning incorrect and oppressive regimes, and providing opportunity to the people to freely study and review the religion and modes of social lifestyle.

Islamic history is a living testimony to the above, since it has been observed repeatedly that when the Muslims conquered cities they would grant freedom to the followers of other religions (just as they would do to the Muslims) and these people even performed their acts of worship and observed their religious ceremonies unhindered. If a limited tax, by the name of Jizyah, was taken from them, it was for the purpose of providing social security and covering the expenses of the security forces, since their lives, properties and womenfolk were under the protection of Islam.

Those people who deal with the history of Islam, are aware of this reality and even the Christians, who have written books on Islam, have acknowledged this issue. For example, in the book *La Civilisation des Arabes* we read: “The Muslims were so lenient towards the other communities that the religious leaders of these communities had the permission to organize their own religious gatherings.”

In some historical accounts it has been reported that a group of Christians, who had arrived in the presence of the Noble Prophet for the purpose of research and investigation, performed their

religious ceremonies in the Mosque of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in the city of Madinah - freely and unchecked!⁶⁷

13. How does Islam attest slavery?

Some people criticize Islam as to why this divine religion, with all its distinguished human values, did not abrogate slavery in its entirety and announce the freedom of all slaves by means of one decisive and general decree.

It is true that Islam has made numerous recommendations with respect to slaves, but what is of prime importance is their unconditional liberty and freedom. Why should a human be owned by another human and lose his freedom - the greatest divine gift?

In one short sentence it can be said that Islam has chalked out an accurate schedule for the freedom of slaves such that eventually not only would all of them gradually become free, but at the same time, this would take place without causing any adverse reaction within the society.

Islam's Strategy for Liberating Slaves

Something that is not usually taken into account is that if an erroneous system penetrates into a society, it takes time to uproot it, and any uncalculated step would only yield an opposite result. This is similar to a person, who is afflicted with a dangerous disease which has reached a very advanced stage of its existence, or an addict, who has been addicted to drugs for decades; in such cases, it is imperative to employ phased and scheduled programs.

Speaking more plainly, if Islam, by means of one general order, had ordered the people to free all the slaves in one stroke, it was possible that most of the slaves might have possibly perished since, at times, they constituted nearly half of the population of the society. Coupled with this was the fact that, they had no source of

⁶⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 205

income, no independent work, no dwelling and no means to lead their lives.

If all the slaves were to have become free on one day and at one particular hour, a huge unemployed group would have suddenly manifested itself within the society such that not only would it have placed itself in difficulty and endangered its own existence, but would have also thrown the entire discipline and order of the society into disarray. This is because when they experienced the pressures of deprivation, they would have had to resort to violence and aggression, and this would have led to dissension, skirmishes and bloodshed.

Therefore, it was vital that they became free and got absorbed into the society, gradually, so that neither did their own lives fall into peril nor did they threaten the peace and security of the society - and it was this calculated strategy that Islam pursued.

There are several parts to this strategy and the most important points from each of them shall be listed here, although briefly, since a detailed explanation demands that a separate and independent book is written for the purpose.

The First Part: Eliminating the Sources of Slavery

Throughout the ages, there have been numerous factors and causes of slavery. Debtors who were unable to pay off their debts, and prisoners of war, landed up as slaves. Power and strength provided a license for procuring slaves. Powerful nations would send their forces armed with various weapons to the backward nations of the African continent and other such regions, subjugate their inhabitants into captivity, transferring them in groups, by means of ships, to the markets of Asian and European countries.

Islam put its foot down upon these means and approved only one instance for slavery - prisoners of war. In addition, even this was not obligatory; it granted permission that, in accordance with the

general welfare and expediencies they could be set free, either unconditionally or after payment of ransom.

In those days there were no prisons in which the prisoners of war could be held till their affairs were sorted out and hence, there lay no alternative except to retain them, by distributing them amongst the families as slaves.

It is self-evident that when these circumstances change, there exists no reason for the leader of the Muslims to adhere to the ruling of slavery in connection with the prisoners of war; rather, he is at liberty to set them free by way of favour or ransom. In this regard, Islam has authorized the leader of the Muslims to take into consideration the general welfare and all-round interests and then choose the course of action necessary. In this manner, the causes leading to further slavery were almost completely eliminated.

The Second Part: Opening the Door Towards freedom

Islam has chalked out an elaborate program for the freedom of slaves, and had the Muslims acted upon it, it would not have been very long before all the slaves had become free and absorbed within the Islamic society.

The main points of this program:

1. One of the eight instances in which zakāt can be expended in Islam is purchasing slaves and setting them free⁶⁸. In this manner, a perpetual and continuous budget from the Public Treasury has been allocated for this purpose and which shall continue till the complete freedom of all slaves is achieved.
2. In pursuance of the objective, provisions exist in Islam which permit the slaves to enter into an agreement with their masters and purchase their freedom by paying them from the wages which they

⁶⁸ *Sūratul Taubah* (9), Verse 60

earn (in Islamic jurisprudence, an entire chapter titled *Mukātabah*, has been devoted to this issue).⁶⁹

3. Freeing slaves is regarded as one of the most important acts of worship in Islam and the Infallibles عليه السلام always led the way in this issue, to the extent that in connection with Imam ‘Alī عليه السلام it has been recorded that:

أَعْتَقَ أَلْفًا مِنْ كَدِّ يَدِهِ.

“He freed a thousand slaves by means of his wages (which he used to earn).”⁷⁰

4. The Infallibles عليه السلام used to free slaves at the slightest of excuses so that it serves as an example for the others, to the extent that when one of the slaves of Imam Baqir عليه السلام performed a good deed, the Imam عليه السلام said:

فَاذْهَبْ فَأَنْتَ حُرٌّ فَإِنِّي أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أَسْتَعْدِمَ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ.

“Go, you are now free for I do not approve of a person from the inmates of Paradise to be my slave (and serve me).”⁷¹

It has been narrated in connection with Imam Sajjād عليه السلام that once, his servant was in the process of pouring water over his عليه السلام head when the vessel slipped from his hand and injured the Imam عليه السلام. The Imam عليه السلام looked up at the servant whereupon, the servant recited:

﴿وَ الْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ﴾

“...and those who restrain (their) anger.”⁷²

⁶⁹ The issue of *mukātabah* and the interesting rulings associated with it has been discussed at great length in *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 459 & 467.

⁷⁰ *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 41, pg. 43

⁷¹ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 16, pg. 32

⁷² *Sūrat Āle Imrān* (3), Verse 134 (Tr.)

Hearing this, the Imam عليه السلام said: I have restrained my anger. The servant recited further:

﴿وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ﴾

“...and pardon other people.”

The Imam عليه السلام said: May Allāh forgive you. The servant continued:

﴿وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

“...and Allāh loves the doers of good (to others)”

whereupon the Imam عليه السلام said: ‘Go. For the sake of Allāh, you are (now) free.’⁷³

5. In some of the traditions it has been stated that the slaves, after a period of seven years, would become free automatically, as we read in a tradition that Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said: One, who is a believer, becomes free after seven years - irrespective of whether his master approves of it or not. It is not permissible to extract services from a slave, who is a believer, after seven years.⁷⁴

In this very chapter there is a tradition from the Noble Prophet ﷺ wherein he ﷺ says:

مَا زَالَ جِبْرَائِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْمَمْلُوكِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيَضْرِبُ لَهُ أَجَلًا يُعْتَقُ فِيهِ.

“Jibra’īl used to make recommendations to me, with respect to the slaves, so often that I was given to suppose that he would shortly stipulate a time-period after which they would (automatically) become free.”⁷⁵

⁷³ *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalain*, vol. 1, pg. 390

⁷⁴ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 16, pg. 36

⁷⁵ *Wasā’il ash-Shī’a*, vol. 17, pg. 37

6. If a person, who owns a slave in partnership, liberates him in the ratio of his share in the partnership, he is obliged to purchase the remaining part of the slave and liberate him fully.⁷⁶

Moreover, if a person who owns a slave fully, frees a portion of the ownership, this freedom permeates into the other portions too and the slave becomes completely free, automatically!⁷⁷

7. Whenever one becomes the owner of one's father, mother, grand-fathers, sons, paternal and maternal uncles and aunts, brothers, sisters or nephews, they immediately (and automatically) become free.

8. If a master fathers a child by way of his slave-girl, it is not permissible for him to sell her and she must be later set free by utilizing the son's share of the inheritance.

This issue became a cause for the freedom of a great number of slave-girls, since many of the slave-girls were like wives for their masters and had children from them.

9. In Islam, expiation of many of the sins has been stipulated by freeing slaves (expiation for unintentional murder, intentional abandonment of fasts, and for (breaking an) oath are some examples of this).

10. Some exceptionally harsh punishments have been singled out (by Islam) whereby if a master were to subject his slave to any of these, the slave would automatically become free.^{78 and 79}

14. What is Jizyah and What is its Philosophy?

Jizyah is derived from *جَزَاءٌ* and refers to the money taken from the non-Muslims, who are under the protection of the Islamic government. It has been named so because it is paid by the non-

⁷⁶ *Sharāi' al-Islam*, (The book of freedom (of a slave)); *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 16, pg. 21

⁷⁷ *Sharāi' al-Islām*, (The book of freedom (of a slave))

⁷⁸ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 16, pg. 26

⁷⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 21, pg. 413

Muslims to the Islamic government as recompense for the protection granted to them with respect to their lives and properties (as stated by Rāghib, in his book *al-Mufradāt*).

It is a kind of an Islamic poll tax that is associated with individuals - not land or wealth; in other words, it is a yearly computation.

Some people are of the opinion that its root is of non-Arabic origin and has been derived from the ancient Persian word کزیت, which means tax taken to strengthen the army. However, numerous others believe that this word is totally Arabic of origin and, as we have previously mentioned, taken from جزاء, in view of the fact that the tax was a compensation for the security provided by the Islamic government to the religious minorities.

Jizyah also existed prior to Islam and it is the view of some people that the first person to levy it was Anushirwān, the Sassanide king. But even if we do not consider this to be the case, he was certainly one who did levy this tax upon his people. He would take varying amounts of 4, 6, 8, or 12 dirhams as a yearly tax from all individuals who were between the ages of 20 and 50, except the functionaries of the government.

The main philosophy behind this tax has been explained as follows: Defending the existence, independence and security of a nation is the responsibility of all the individuals of that nation. Now, if one group comes forward to practically shoulder this responsibility (in the form of soldiers), whilst another group, due to its involvement in work and trade, is unable to stand alongside the soldiers, then, it is the responsibility of this second group to pay for the expenses of the soldiers and security forces in the form of a per capita tax, in the year.

We have evidence which attest this philosophy to be true in the case of Jizyah – be it before the arrival of Islam or after.

The age-group of those who had to pay Jizyah during the rule of Anushirwān - as has been previously stated by us (between 20 and

50 years) - is an articulate testimony in this regard, since people in this age-group possess the strength and ability to carry weapons, and to help out in maintaining the independence and security of a nation. But being engaged in work and trade, they used to pay the Jizyah instead.

Another testimony in this regard is the fact that in Islam, it is not necessary for the Muslims to pay Jizyah. This is because Jihād is obligatory upon everyone and when the occasion demands, everyone must step out into the battle-field to stand up against the enemy. Since the religious minorities are exempted from Jihād, they must pay Jizyah in order that, in this way, they (too) have a part in safeguarding the security of the Islamic nation in which they lead a life of peace and tranquillity.

In addition to this, the exemption of ladies, children, the old and the blind of the religious minorities from paying Jizyah is yet another proof in this regard.

From what has been mentioned, it becomes plain that Jizyah is just a kind of monetary assistance paid by the People of the Book vis-à-vis responsibility, which the Muslims have shouldered with respect to safeguarding their lives and possessions.

Thus those people who have regarded Jizyah as a kind of 'subjugation of rights', have not taken into consideration the spirit and the idea that lie behind it. They are oblivious of the fact that when the Ahlul Kitāb (People of the Book) enter into the category of Ahlul Dhimmah (protected people), the Islamic leadership is obliged to grant them protection from every kind of aggression and harassment.

Bearing in mind that against the payment of Jizyah, in addition to availing protection and security benefits, they do not possess any other obligation such as participation in battles or involvement in other defensive and security affairs, it is obvious that their

responsibility towards the Islamic government is much lighter than that of the Muslims.

It follows that by paying a meagre annual amount, they avail themselves of all the benefits of the Islamic government as do the Muslims while, at the same time, they are not exposed to any danger.

This philosophy can be corroborated by examining the covenants established during the period of the Islamic government between the Muslims and the People of the Book in connection with Jizyah, in which it has been expressly stated that the People of the Book were obliged to pay the Jizyah and in return, the Muslims were obliged to guarantee their safety, to the extent that even if some enemy happened to attack them, the Islamic government would be duty-bound to defend them!

These covenants are numerous in number and, as an example, we present below the covenant, which was entered into between Khālīd b. Walīd and the Christians living around the Euphrates. The text of the covenant is as follows: “This is a letter from Khālīd b. Walīd to Saluba⁸⁰ and his companions. I hereby enter into a covenant of Jizyah and defence with you, and in exchange for it you shall avail of the benefit of our support. As long as we continue to support and defend you, we shall possess the right to take Jizyah from you and if not, then we shall have no right to take it. This covenant has been written in the month of Safar, twelve years after the migration (Hijri).”⁸¹

Interestingly, we observe that whenever there was a failure or neglect in supporting or defending them, the Muslims would either return the Jizyah to them or not collect it from them at all!

It is also necessary to note that the measure of Jizyah is not fixed and defined - rather, it depends upon the ability of those paying it.

⁸⁰ The leader of the Christian group.

⁸¹ Quoted from *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 10, pg. 294

However, Islamic history reveals that a small amount would usually be specified, and at times this would not exceed one dinār a year. Occasionally the covenant even contained the condition that those paying the Jizyah were obliged to pay it in the measure of their means and ability.

The above discussion serves to clear the various objections and caustic criticisms levelled at this Islamic ruling, and establish that this is a ruling that is both just and logical.⁸²

15. What is the Philosophy behind the Prohibition of Battles in the Holy Months?

In verse 36 of Sūratul Taubah, we read:

﴿إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ﴾

“Surely the number of months with Allāh is twelve months in Allāh’s ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred.”

The question that is propounded here is: Why are Muslims prohibited to wage battles in the four months (Dhul Qa’dah, Dhul Hijjah, Muḥarram and Rajab)?

Prohibition of battles in these four months is one of the ways to bring to conclusion long-drawn and protracted battles, and a means of invitation towards peace and reconciliation. With the laying down of arms, the dying down of the sound of clashing of swords and whistling of arrows, and the presence of an opportunity for thought and reflection, there is a strong possibility that the battles may come to an end.

There is a vast difference between a persistent and continued confrontation and a renewed start following a lull - the latter being

⁸² *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 354

much more difficult and severe. We cannot forget how difficult it had been during the Vietnam War, to bring about a ceasefire for a period of 24 hours for the start of the Christian New Year - or in other similar instances. On the other hand, Islam has announced for its followers a ceasefire of four months in every year, and this itself is an indication of its peace-loving nature. But as we previously mentioned, if the enemy desires to misuse this Islamic ruling and trample the sanctity of these holy months, the Muslims have been granted permission to retaliate in a likewise manner.⁸³

⁸³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 7, pg. 408

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

16. What Rights does Islam offer to the Women?

With the onset of Islam and its special teachings, the life of women entered into a new phase – a phase which differed vastly from the previous one and became one in which women availed of all kinds of individual, social and human rights. The basis of Islamic teachings with respect to women is exactly what we read in the Noble Qur'an:

﴿ وَ لَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْنَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ﴾

“...and they have rights similar to those against them in a just manner...” i.e. the women possess rights and privileges in the same measure as the responsibilities which they shoulder within the society.

Islam considers a woman, just like a man, to possess a human soul, will and choice, and perceives her to be on the path of spiritual perfection, which is actually the purpose of human creation. It is for this reason that it has placed man and woman alongside each other, addressed them together:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ﴾

and:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ﴾

and imposed moral, educative and scientific curriculum upon both of them.

By means of verses such as:

﴿ وَمَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ
الْجَنَّةَ ﴾

“...and whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden.”⁸⁴

Islam has promised the benefits of complete prosperity to both the sexes.

By verses such as:

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.”⁸⁵

it has elucidated that every man and woman, by adhering to and implementing the Islamic curriculum, can achieve material and spiritual perfection, and possess a pure, good life that is replete with ease and comfort.

Islam considers a woman, like man, to be completely free and independent, and the Noble Qur’an, by way of verses like:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ﴾

“Every soul is held in pledge for what it earns.”⁸⁶

or

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا﴾

“Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against himself.”⁸⁷

It declares this freedom to be for all people - men and women.

⁸⁴ *Sūratul Ghāfir* (40), Verse 40

⁸⁵ *Sūratul Naḥl* (16), Verse 97

⁸⁶ *Sūratul Muddaththir* (74), Verse 38

⁸⁷ *Sūratul Jāthiyah* (45), Verse 15

We observe that the Islamic penal code sentences both genders with the same kind of retribution, as can be seen in the following verse and other similar verses:

﴿الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ﴾

“The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication - flog each of them with a hundred whippings.”⁸⁸

On the other hand, since independence is an inevitable consequence of (free) will and choice, Islam has also extended this independence to all monetary privileges, permitting women to enter into various kinds of monetary transactions and regarding her as the rightful owner of her income and investment. In *Sūratul Nisā* we read:

﴿لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ﴾

“Men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn.”⁸⁹

In view of the fact that the word اكتساب (used in the verse) - unlike the word كسب - is used to denote acquisition of wealth, the use of this word conveys the meaning that the wealth which is acquired becomes associated with the person acquiring it⁹⁰, and also taking into consideration the general rule:

النَّاسُ مُسَلِّطُونَ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ.

“All the people have authority over their own wealth”, we can easily infer that Islam holds the fiscal independence of women in great esteem and does not differentiate between a man and a woman in this regard.

⁸⁸ *Sūratul Nūr* (24), Verse 2

⁸⁹ *Sūratul Nisā* (4), Verse 32

⁹⁰ Refer *Al-Mufradāt* of Rāghib Isfahānī. It should be known that this point is applicable in instances when كَسَب and اِكْتَسَب are used in conjunction with one another.

In short, Islam regards a woman as a fundamental element of the society and thus, she should not be treated as an entity that is lacking in will, and dependant upon or in need of a guardian.

One Should Not Err With Respect to the Meaning Of 'Equality'

The only thing that needs be taken into consideration – to which Islam has paid special attention but which some individuals reject out of excessive and imprudent sentimentality - is the issue of physical and psychological difference between man and woman, and the difference in their responsibilities.

We just cannot refute the reality that there exist vast physical and psychological differences between the two sexes, and since these are mentioned in various books it is not necessary that we repeat them here. However, a summary of all of them is as follows:

A woman is the base for man's existence since the development of the children take place within her arms; hence just as she has been created physically to handle the tasks of bearing, developing and educating the coming generations, psychologically too she is in possession of a greater share of feelings and sentiments.

With the existence of these vast differences, can it be said that men and women must be in step with each other in all matters and should be absolutely equal in all affairs and issues?

Should we not champion the cause of justice in the society? But is justice other than that every person should adhere to his own responsibility and enjoy the benefits of the existential distinctions present within him?

Thus, is it not contrary to justice to involve and engage a woman in tasks that do not match and harmonize with her physical and psychological setup?

Here we observe that Islam, even as it voices support for justice and equality, grants precedence to man in some of the social tasks which demand asperity or meticulousness - such as guardianship of the house - and has allowed the woman to function as an assistant.

Both a 'house' and a 'society' are in need of an administrator, and the reins of administration should eventually end up in the hands of one person or else it would result in contest, chaos and confusion.

Under these circumstances, who is better suited for the task - a man or a woman? Impartial and unbiased computations reveal that the structural state of man demands that the administration and management of the family should be placed upon the man while the woman should act as his assistant.

Even though there are some who insist on ignoring these realities, the state of life prevalent in the present-day world and even within communities that have granted women complete freedom and equality, reveal that in practice the issue is exactly as has been stated above, although in speech the issue may be made to appear differently.⁹¹

The Spiritual Worth of Man and Woman

The Noble Qur'an perceives man and woman - with regards to their presence before Allāh and with respect to achieving spiritual ranks under similar conditions - to be equal. It refuses to consider the dissimilarity in their sexes and the difference in the structure of their bodies, (which consequently manifest in the variation in their social responsibilities), as being indicative of a difference in them with regards to the achievement of human perfection; rather, in this regard, it considers them to be on par with one another and hence mentions them together. Numerous verses of the Noble Qur'an were revealed at a time when a great number of the communities of the world had been reluctant to recognize the female species as a human being, regarding her as an accursed entity and a source of sin, deviation and death!

Many of the ancient communities even held the belief that a woman's worship was not acceptable in the eyes of Allāh. Many of the Greeks considered a woman to be a defiled entity and an evil

⁹¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 113

handiwork of Satan. The Romans and some of the Greeks believed that basically females did not possess a human soul and as such, the human soul was specifically confined to the males!

Interestingly, till recently, Christian scholars in Spain engaged themselves in discussing whether women, like men, possessed human souls or not, and whether or not their souls would continue to live eternally after their deaths. After their discussions they eventually concluded that since a woman's soul is an isthmus between an animal and a human soul, it cannot be eternal, save for the soul of Maryam عليها السلام.⁹²

Here it becomes apparent how far from reality the allegation is, which some ignorant individuals level against Islam that it is a religion of males and not females. Generally speaking, if, due to physical and sentimental differences which exist within males and females, some differences in respect of social responsibilities are observed in the Islamic Laws, it does not by any means, diminish the spiritual worth of a woman. There exists no difference between a man and a woman in this regard; the doors of success and prosperity lay equally open for both of them, just as we read in the Qur'an:

﴿بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ﴾

“All are from one species and one society.”⁹³

17. What is the Philosophy of Hijāb?

Undoubtedly, in this age of ours - which some have named as the 'age of nudity and sexual freedom' and in which, West-stricken individuals regard wantonness of women as being part of this freedom - the mention of hijāb is very disconcerting for this group

⁹² Refer the books An apology for Muhammad and the Koran, Huqooq-e-Zan Dar Islam and other books related to the humans beliefs and views.

⁹³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 223

of people and at times is even looked upon as a myth associated with the ancient times!

However, the innumerable evils and the ever-increasing problems arising out of this unconditioned freedom have gradually resulted in the concept of ḥijāb being viewed with a greater interest.

Of course, in the Islamic and religious environments - especially in Iran after the revolution - a great number of issues have been clarified and satisfactory answers to most of these questions have been provided. Nevertheless, the significance of the topic demands this issue to be discussed more comprehensively.

The issue under discussion is: Should women (with due apologies) be placed at the disposal of all men for the purpose of being exploited by them by way of sight, hearing and touch (excepting sexual intercourse), or should these benefits be the sole prerogative of their respective husbands?

The point of debate is about whether women should continue to remain entangled in a never-ending competition in flaunting their bodies and stirring up the physical and carnal desires of men, or whether these issues should be uprooted from the social environment and restricted to the familial and matrimonial milieu. Islam advocates the latter plan and ḥijāb can be looked upon as a part of this agenda, whereas the Westerners support the former plan!

Islam avers that all such physical pleasures - sexual intercourse as well as those derived by means of sight, hearing and touch - are specific to the husbands, and anything beyond this is a sin which leads to pollution and impurity within the society.

The philosophy behind ḥijāb is indeed evident since:

1. Nudity of women, which is quite naturally accompanied by adornment and coquettishness puts men, especially the youths, in a state of perpetual stimulation - a stimulation which affects their nerves, generates within them pathological nervous excitement and

at times even brings about psychological disorders. There is a limit to the burden of excitement which the human nerves can endure. Don't all the psychologists caution that perpetual excitement leads to disorders and diseases?

This is especially in view of the fact that the sexual impulse is the strongest and the most profound of all impulses within man and, all through the ages, has been the cause of destructive events and horrendous offences, to the extent that people have gone on to say: You shall not come across any important event (in history), except that a woman has played a part in it!

Is the continuous provocation of this impulse by means of nudity, and intensifying it, not tantamount to playing with fire? Is this act wise and prudent?

Islam desires that Muslim men and women should possess a soul that is calm, nerves that are composed, and eyes and ears that are pure, and this is one of the philosophies of ḥijāb.

2. Substantiated and conclusive statistics reveal that with the rise in nudity, the world has correspondingly witnessed a continuous rise in divorces and matrimonial separations. This is because "whatever the eyes see, the heart covets"; and whatever the heart (which here means the errant and wild desires) covets, it seeks to obtain it at any cost. Therefore, every new day the heart gets attracted to one and bids farewell to another.

In an environment where ḥijāb is prevalent (together with adherence to the other Islamic conditions), the husband and wife belong to each other and their sentiments, love and feelings are exclusively for one another.

But in the 'free market of nudity' wherein women have been practically transformed into a commodity of mutual use - (at least in issues other than sexual intercourse) - the sanctity of a matrimonial alliance becomes meaningless, and families, similar to a spider's web, swiftly break apart and the children are left without guardians.

3. The increase in indecency and obscenity, and the escalation in the number of illegitimate children are the most painful consequences of non-observance of ḥijāb – a fact which, in our opinion, does not require any figures and statistics; and the reasons for this, especially in the Western society, are so very apparent so as to eliminate the need for any mention.

We do not say that non-observance of ḥijāb is the sole and fundamental cause of obscenities and illegitimate children, nor do we say that colonialism and destructive political issues have not had any contribution to it; rather, what we wish to state is that the issue of nudity and non-observance of ḥijāb is as one of the instrumental and effective factors for those evils.

In view of the fact that ‘indecency’, and worse than this, ‘illegitimate children’ were and are amongst the sources of various crimes in human societies, the dangerous dimension of this issue becomes all the more clear.

We perceive the gravity of the matter when we hear that, according to statistics⁹⁴, in the United Kingdom five hundred thousand illegitimate children are born every year and then when we hear that a group of British intellectuals has issued a warning to those in the echelons of power with respect to this ongoing trend. The warning is not motivated out of ethical or religious concerns but rather out of concern for the dangers these illegitimate children pose to the safety of the society, to the extent that their involvement is observed in numerous criminal dossiers. We (also) come to realize that even those who possess scant respect for religion or ethical issues consider the issue of the spread of indecency to be catastrophic. Thus, everything that serves to increase the sphere of physical immorality in human societies is a

⁹⁴ Please note that some of the statistics presented may be outdated as this work is a translation from a book which was originally published many years ago. (Ed.)

threat for their security, and the consequences – in whatever manner we may compute them - shall always be to their detriment.

Studies by educated scholars reveal that reduction of work, backwardness and lack of responsibility are most noticeably perceived in schools, which are co-educational in nature and in centres where males and females work together in an ambience of licentiousness and complete freedom.

4. The issue of ‘obscenity of women’ and ‘humiliation of their personalities’ also holds great importance and requires no statistics to prove it. When a society desires a woman with a bare body, it is quite obvious that day by day, it would demand increased beautification and augmented ostentation from her. In a society wherein a woman, due to her physical attraction, is utilized for promotion and publicity of products, as a decoration for the reception rooms, or as a tool for attracting tourists, her personality is reduced to that of a doll or a trivial and insignificant item, and her lofty human values are totally thrust into oblivion; ultimately, her only distinction and glory lies in her youth, beauty and self-exhibition.

Thus, she is transformed into a device for satisfying the carnal desires of a handful of individuals, who are polluted, deceptive and possess satanic attributes!

In such a society, how is it possible for a woman to manifest herself in the light of her knowledge, awareness, sagacity and moral traits, and to occupy a lofty rank and status?

It is indeed painful that in the Western and West-stricken countries, and in our country (too) before the Islamic Revolution, the maximum prominence, fame, repute, money, income and standing had been for the polluted and promiscuous women, who had come to acquire renown as ‘artists and performers’. Wherever they went, the management of this polluted environment would scramble after them to welcome their presence!

Praise be to Allāh that the entire apparatus was annihilated and the female sex emerged from her previous triteness or her erstwhile standing as a cultural doll and an insignificant item, and salvaged her personality. She took for herself the veil without being secluded and isolated, presenting herself in every expedient and constructive arena of the society - even the battlefield - with the same veil and ḥijāb.

Criticisms Levelled by the Opponents of ḥijāb

At this point we come to the objections which are levelled by those opposing the veil and which need to be discussed, albeit concisely:

1. The most important thing which all of them support in unanimity and which they propound as the fundamental objection with respect to the issue of ḥijāb is that women constitute one half of the society but the ḥijāb pushes this multitude into seclusion thereby causing them to lag behind culturally and intellectually. Especially during the period of economic thriving, when there is a greater need for active human participation, this large female force would remain totally unutilized in the path of economic progress, not to speak of their lack of presence in social and cultural centres. Thus, they are transformed into a mere consumer that is a burden for the society.

But those who have resorted to this logic have either been totally oblivious of certain points, or have probably feigned lack of knowledge about them:

Firstly: Who says that the Islamic ḥijāb isolates a woman and distances her from the social arena? If, in the past, it had been necessary for us to exhaust ourselves in order to present proofs and arguments in defence of this issue, now, after the Islamic Revolution, there does not exist the slightest need for them, for with our own eyes we observe groups of women, in the Islamic ḥijāb, presenting themselves in all places - in offices, workstations, political rallies and demonstrations, on the radio and television, in

cultural and educational institutes, in hospitals and medical centres, especially for nursing those injured in war, and even in the battlefield against the enemies.

In short, the present state (of the Islamic society) is a fitting riposte to all these objections; if previously we spoke of the 'possibility' of such a state, today we find ourselves facing the 'occurrence' of it and philosophers have stated that the best proof for the 'possibility (of occurrence)' of a thing is the (actual) 'occurrence' of that thing, and this is something, which is too evident and manifest to require any explanation.

Secondly: Is managing the house, training and educating the youthful children and transforming them into individuals not a task? After all, through their strength and ability, the youths are able to set the gigantic wheels of the society into motion.

People who do not view this great mission of women positively are ill-informed of the role played by family and training in constructing a healthy, prosperous and dynamic society. They imagine that the (correct) manner is that our men and women, like those of the West should, at the first sign of daybreak, leave their houses for their places of work, either leaving their children in nurseries or locking them up in a room thereby making them taste the bitterness of imprisonment at a time when they are blooming buds. -They are totally oblivious of the fact that this approach not only shatters their personalities but also moulds them into soulless children, who are found to be lacking in human sentiments and affections, and who will eventually jeopardize the future of society.

Secondly: Another of their objections is that the *ḥijāb* is a cumbersome dress, which is not well suited for social activities, especially in the modern automobile age. What should a veiled woman look after - herself, her chador, her children or her work?

But these critics do not realise the fact that the *ḥijāb* does not always mean a chador, but rather it refers to a woman's covering. If

the ḥijāb is possible by means of the chador, so much the better, but if not, then a covering is quite sufficient.

The womenfolk of our country, who engage in farming and live in villages - especially those who work in the rice-fields and perform the most important and difficult work of cultivating and harvesting the crop, have answered this objection, practically. They have shown that in numerous places a village-woman, while observing the Islamic ḥijāb, can work more than a man and better too - without the ḥijāb hampering or obstructing her work in the slightest.

Thirdly: Another objection which they level is that since ḥijāb establishes separation between men and women, it amplifies the greedy nature of man and instead of extinguishing it, only serves to inflame his covetousness, since:

الْإِنْسَانُ حَرِيصٌ عَلَى مَا مُنِعَ.

“People covet that which is forbidden for them.”

A comparison of our present society in which the ḥijāb is prevalent in all places - without exception - with the one that prevailed during the period of the satanic regime, which used to force the women to take off their ḥijāb will provide the answer to this objection, or more correctly, this sophism and fallacy.

Those days, every alley and neighbourhood was a centre of wickedness and depravity, and an ambience of incredible immorality prevailed within the households. Divorces were rampant, the number of illegitimate children was staggering and there were a thousand other curses.

We do not claim that all of these have been eradicated, but they have undoubtedly been greatly reduced and our society, in this regard, has regained its well-being. And if, Allāh Willing, the state of affairs continues its course and all the other tangles come to order, our society, with respect to pureness of the households, and

preservation of the merit and worth of women, shall come to achieve a desired and ideal state.⁹⁵

18. Why is the Inheritance of Men twice that of Women?

Although it appears that the inheritance of men is twice that of women, a closer look reveals that from one viewpoint, the inheritance of women is twice that of men! This is due to Islam's support for the rights of women.

Explanation

Islam has placed certain responsibilities upon men, as a result of which, virtually one half of their earnings is spent upon women whereas no such responsibilities have been placed upon women.

The male has to bear the expenses for all of his wife's needs such as housing, clothing, food and other necessities; apart from this, the expenses of his minor children are also to be provided by him, whereas the wife is exempt from every kind of payment, even if it is for her own self. Thus, a woman can stockpile her entire share of inheritance, whereas a man is bound to spend his share upon himself, his wife and children. Consequently, half of his earnings are effectively spent upon his wife and the other half is for him, whereas the entire share of the wife remains unused and intact.

For a better understanding, consider the following example: Suppose that the entire wealth existing globally is 30 billion tumans⁹⁶, which will be gradually distributed as inheritance amongst men and women (sons and daughters). When we compute the earnings of all men and women of the world by way of inheritance, we find that of this amount, the share of the men is 20 billion tumans while that of the women is 10 billion. However, as is customary, the women will marry, after which the responsibility of providing for their expenses will fall upon the shoulders of men and

⁹⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 14, pg. 442

⁹⁶ The currency used in Iran – at present (2005), one US Dollar is approximately 900 tuman.

so, the women can conveniently put their 10 billion tumans aside while, at the same time, be a partner to the men in their share of 20 billion, since this amount would be utilized by the men to provide for the expenses of their wives and their children.

Thus, in reality, half of the share of the men - totalling 10 billion tumans - would be spent on the women. This, in addition to the 10 billion tumans, which the women had placed aside, would collectively amount to 20 billion tumans - two-thirds of the (supposed) global wealth - whereas the men, effectively, do not use up more than 10 billion tumans for themselves.

In conclusion, the actual share of women, with respect to 'consumption and use', is twice the actual share of men, and this distinction is influenced by the fact that, generally, their ability and strength for generating earnings is less than that of men. This is a kind of just and logical support, which Islam has offered to the women, allotting a greater actual share for them although, ostensibly, their share appears to be one half (that of the males).

Incidentally, upon referring the Islamic sources we come to infer that the above query had plagued the minds of the people from the very onset of Islam.

Time and again they would question the Imams in this regard and their answers predominantly pointed to one meaning, which is: Allāh has placed upon the males the onus of bearing the wife's expenses and paying them the dower, and so, He has allotted them a greater share (from the inheritance).

In the book *Ma'āniul Akhbār* it has been reported that Imam 'Alī b. Musa al-Riḍā عليه السلام in reply to this query, said: "The share of the females, in the inheritance, is half that of the males because when a female enters into marriage she receives something, while the male is obliged to give something. In addition, it is the responsibility of the males to shoulder the expenses of the females whereas the

females are neither responsible for their own expenses nor that of the males.”⁹⁷

19. Why is Blood Money for Women half that for Men?

Some individuals might possibly object that in the verses of qisās (retaliation) it has been ordered that a man should not be subjected to retaliation for the murder of a woman; but is a man superior to a woman? Why should a criminal, having killed a woman and shed unwarranted blood of a gender constituting more than half the global population, not be subjected to retaliation for his crime?

In answer to this it must be stated that the verse does not intend that a man should not face retaliation for killing a woman, rather - as has been explicitly explained in the Islamic jurisprudence - the guardians of the murdered woman can seek retaliation from the male murderer, but upon the condition that they pay half the blood money (to the heirs of the murder).

In other words, when it is said that a man cannot be subjected to retaliation for the murder of a woman, what is intended is ‘unconditional retaliation’. However, if half of the blood money is paid, then it is permissible to have him killed in retaliation (for the crime committed by him).

There is no need to explain that the payment of the abovementioned sum for seeking retaliation is not because the woman is any less human than man or inferior to him. This is a perception which is totally misplaced and illogical, and perhaps the expression ‘blood money’ is the basis for this misleading notion. The payment of half the “blood money” is only to compensate the loss, which is suffered by his family, after the retaliation has been extracted.

⁹⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 290

Explanation

Predominantly, it is the men who are the instrumental members of households monetarily and who, by means of their activities, shoulder the expenses of their families. Thus, the difference between the death of a man and that of a woman, in financial terms, is something which is not concealed from anyone, and which, if not taken into account, would cause unjustified damage to be inflicted upon the survivors of the dead man and his innocent children. Hence, Islam, by stipulating the payment of half the blood money in the case of retaliation against a man, has taken into consideration the rights of all the individuals and has prevented this economic vacuum and irreparable blow to fall upon a family. Islam never permits that the rights of other individuals - like the children of the person facing retaliation - to be trampled under the pretext of the term 'equality'.

Of course, it is possible that some women may be higher earners for their families than men, but as we do know, rules and regulations are not determined by (a few) individuals but rather, the entire category of men is compared with the entire category of women (take note).⁹⁸

20. What is the philosophy behind the dower for women?

In the Age of Ignorance, since the people did not attach any significance to the women, they would essentially place the dower of the women, which was their incontrovertible right, in the hands of their guardians and it was looked upon as the rightful property of the guardians. At times, they would even stipulate the dower of a woman to be the marriage of another woman; for example, a brother would give his sister in marriage to a person, who, in reciprocation, would marry his sister to him and this itself would be the dower of the two women.

⁹⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 611

Islam abrogated all these unjust customs and, allocating the dower as a categorical right of the women, has repeatedly counselled the men, in the verses of the Qur'an, to strictly and completely respect this right of the women.

In Islam, no fixed amount has been ascertained for the dower and it is reliant upon the understanding reached between the two spouses. However, in numerous traditions it has been greatly emphasized to refrain from stipulating a weighty dower, but this is a ruling which is recommended, not obligatory.

At this point the question which arises is that both man and woman benefit equally from the matrimonial alliance – an alliance that is based on mutual benefits. This being the case, what is the need for man to pay a sum, large or small, as dower to the woman? Also, does this issue not deal a blow to the personality of the woman and impart an appearance of trade and transaction to marriage?

It is in the light of the above points that some individuals vehemently oppose the issue of dower, especially West-stricken ones, who derive their inspiration from the fact that dower is a custom, unconventional in the West. Whereas (the reality is that) not only does the excision of the dower not elevate the personality of a woman, rather, it serves to jeopardize her position.

Explanation: Admittedly, both man and woman derive equal benefits out of a matrimonial alliance. Nevertheless there is no denying the fact that in the event of a divorce, the woman has to sustain a greater loss, since:

Firstly: Man, due to his special physical ability, generally possesses a greater control and yields greater influence in the society. However much people may seek to deny this outright reality in the course of their discussions, the state of human social life which we observe with our own eyes - even in the European societies, wherein women enjoy the so-called total freedom - reveals that high earning jobs are principally held by men.

In addition, men possess greater options when embarking upon another spouse-selection, but this is not so in the case of widows - especially after witnessing some aging and being deprived of their assets of youth and beauty - since the options that lie before them, in selecting a new spouse, are greatly diminished.

Considering these aspects, it becomes evident that the conveniences and resources which a woman loses after marriage is much more than what a man loses and so, in actuality, the dower is something which serves to indemnify a woman's losses and a means for securing her future. Apart from this, the dower is also looked upon as a deterrent for man to seek separation and divorce.

Admittedly, the dower, according to the laws of Islam, becomes obligatory upon the husband as soon as the matrimonial alliance is entered into, and the wife is entitled to claim it from him immediately, but since it generally remains as an obligation upon the man, not only is it regarded as savings for her future but also a backing, which safeguards her rights and prevents the disintegration of her marriage alliance (of course exceptions do exist, but what we have stated holds true for the majority of the cases).

If there are people who have wrongly interpreted the dower as being a kind of 'price-tag' for the women, this meaning has no connection with Islam, for Islam has never looked upon the dower as a 'cost' or a 'price' of a commodity. The most excellent proof for this is the formula of marriage in which the 'man' and the 'woman' are officially looked upon as two fundamental parties of the marriage alliance whereas the dower is regarded as a surplus issue and is placed on the side-lines. It is for this reason that if, in the formula of marriage, the dower is not mentioned, the formula does not become void whereas if, in a transaction, the amount is not stipulated, it would definitely become null and void (of course, it should be noted that if the dower has not been stated in the formula of marriage, the husband, after the consummation of marriage, is

obliged to pay the wife mahr al-mithl (suitable dower), i.e. the dower, which is usually paid to women of similar and equal stature.)

From the above we conclude that the dower is a kind of 'compensation of loss' and 'backing to safeguard the rights of a woman' and not a 'rate' or a 'price-tag'; probably, the use of the word nihlah - meaning largesse - in verse 4 of Sūratul Nisā is an allusion to this very fact.⁹⁹

21. How does Islam permit the physical punishment of women?

In verse 34 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَ إهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَ
اضْرِبُوهُنَّ ﴾

“And (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and (if ineffective) leave them alone in the sleeping-places and (if even this proves futile with no way of compelling them into fulfilling their responsibilities, except the use of force, then) beat them.”

The question that arises here is: How can Islam permit the physical punishment of a woman?

The answer to this objection, in light of this meaning of the verse, the traditions which discuss it, the explanations which have been presented in the books of jurisprudence and also the explanations which the psychologists offer today, is not very difficult, for:

Firstly: The verse sanctions physical discipline for those disobedient and irresponsible individuals for whom no other means have proved effective. Incidentally this is not an issue that is new and confined to Islam, rather, in all the laws of the world, when all peaceful and non-violent means to compel a person into fulfilling his obligations prove unproductive, there exist provisions to eventually resort to

⁹⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 263

force. This resort to force is not restricted to mere beatings, but at times even extends to severe punishments and on occasions going all the way up to the death penalty!

Secondly: The 'physical punishment' in this case - as has been mentioned in books of jurisprudence - should be mild and moderate so as not to cause breakage of bones, injuries or (for that matter, even) bruises.

Thirdly: Modern psychoanalysts are of the belief that a segment of the female populace possesses masochistic tendencies and when this state intensifies within them, the only way to calm them down is by means of mild physical punishment. Therefore, it is possible that the physical punishment has been prescribed taking (the state of) such individuals into consideration, for in their case, this mild physical penalty would be lenitive in nature and serve as a kind of psychological remedy for them.

Without any doubt, if any one of these steps (mentioned in the verse) proves effective and the woman embarks upon performing her duties, the man has no right to inconvenience her and it is for this reason that the latter portion of the verse states:

﴿ فَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمْكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ﴾

“Then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them.”

If it is asked: Such rebelliousness, violation and recalcitrance are also likely to be displayed by the men; would the males then be subjected to such punishments too? The answer to this is in the affirmative. In the event of their shirking their responsibilities, men too, like the women, face retribution and even physical punishment; the only difference being that, since this is something beyond the ability of women, it is the duty of the Islamic judge to utilize various means - even ta'zīr (physical punishment) - to make such violators become aware and heedful of their responsibilities.

The incident of the man, who had victimized his spouse and who, under no circumstances, had been willing to submit before the truth whereupon ‘Alī عليه السلام with harshness and threat of the sword, forced him into submission, is well-known.

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا﴾

“Surely Allāh is High, Great.”

Finally the verse again cautions the men from abusing their positions as guardians of their respective households, and exhorts them to reflect upon Allāh’s Power, which is above all powers, for surely Allāh is High, Great.¹⁰⁰

22. Why are men permitted to have more than one spouse whereas the women are not?

The Noble Qur’an has permitted polygamy (but, with strict conditions and within prescribed limits) and here we have to face up to a barrage of objections and assaults of the opponents, who, armed with a cursory study and influenced by imprudent sentiments, have set out to oppose this Islamic ruling. The Westerners, in particular, tend to criticize us by saying that Islam has permitted the males to create a harem and take for themselves an unlimited number of spouses. As a matter of fact, Islam has neither permitted the construction of harems - as they take it to mean - nor has it permitted unconditional and unqualified polygamy.

Explanation: Studying the conditions that prevailed in different regions before the onset of Islam, we infer that unreserved polygamy was a routine affair in those days even to the extent that on some occasions, when the polytheists would convert into Muslims they would have in their possession around ten spouses. Thus, multiplicity of wives is not an invention of Islam; on the contrary, Islam has confined it within the framework of the

¹⁰⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 373

necessities of human life and qualified it by means of strict conditions.

Islamic laws are determined on the basis of the actual needs of humans and not on the basis of external propaganda and ill-considered sentiments. The issue of polygamy too has been given consideration from this angle. This is because none can deny the fact that men, in the various goings-on of life, are more exposed to peril than the women, and they are the ones, who predominantly bear the brunt of actual casualties in battles and other catastrophes.

It cannot also be denied that the sexual life-span of men is more than that of women since women, at a certain age lose their sexual strength whereas men do not.

In addition, during menstruation and certain phases of pregnancy the women are obliged to observe a restriction of sexual activity whereas the men have no such restrictions.

Apart from all the above there are women who, due to various reasons, lose their husbands and are usually not sought by the men as a first-wife, and in the absence of polygamy, they would always have to remain without a spouse; we read in numerous newspapers that this group of widowed women, due to the restrictions placed upon the issue of polygamy, complain of the tangles of life and regard this curb as a kind of sentimental oppression which they are subjected to.

Taking these realities into consideration, in such instances wherein the balance between men and women is disrupted due to certain factors, we are left with no option except to select one of the following three alternatives:

1. Men should, at all times, content themselves with just one spouse, while the extra women should remain without a spouse for the rest of their lives, suppressing and killing all their innate needs and internal desires.

2. Men should have only one official and legal spouse, but are permitted to establish illicit physical relationships with women, who are without spouses, and keep them as mistresses and paramours.

3. Those, who possess the means, should be permitted to govern more than one spouse. Individuals, who would not be inconvenienced physically, economically and ethically, and who possess the ability to maintain equity and even handedness amongst all their spouses and children, should be permitted to take more than one spouse for themselves.

Undoubtedly, there exists no other alternative than these three.

If we were to choose the first alternative, we would have to wage a battle against human innate instincts and spiritual requirements, and disregard these sentiments and feelings of the women - a battle which we would never win. On the assumption that this scheme is actually put into practice, the inhumane aspect associated with it is something which is clear for everyone to see.

In other words, when necessary, this issue should not always be scrutinized from the viewpoint of the first wife but should also be analyzed from the standpoint of the second wife. Those who consider polygamy to be the cause of the sufferings of the first wife, view this issue from only one perspective. It ought to be studied from three perspectives - from the standpoint of the male, the first spouse and the second spouse, and the issue should be judged after taking into regard the interests and well-being of all three of them.

As for the second alternative, if we were to select it, we would have to legalize and formalize prostitution. In addition, the women, who are kept as mistresses and used for sexual gratification, would neither have any security nor a future for themselves, and their status would be ruined, and these are things that no rational person should ever accept.

Thus, the only alternative that remains is the third one, which not only responds positively to the innate desires and the inherent needs of the women, but it also keeps women away from the evil consequences of prostitution. It prevents disruption of the lives of this group of women and thus serves to protect society from a multitude of sins.

It must be noted that although polygamy is a social necessity in certain instances and is one of the incontestable rulings of Islam, fulfilling the conditions necessary for it in the present times differs vastly from that of the past. In the simple and Spartan life of the past, it was easy for everyone to maintain equity amongst the spouses but in the present times, those who wish to make use of this ruling must ensure that comprehensive equity is observed. Basically, polygamy should not be pursued for the sake of carnal and physical desires.

Interestingly, the very opponents of polygamy (such as the Westerners), during the course of history, have encountered events that have clearly manifested their need for it. For example, after World War II, the need for polygamy was intensely felt in the war-torn countries, especially Germany, which even compelled some of their intellectuals to reconsider their views with respect to the prohibition of polygamy. In addition, they conducted a study of the Islamic program of multiplicity of wives from al-Azhar University. However, severe objections on the part of the Church forced them to shelve their plans; the consequence of which was wild and outrageous profligacy that eventually engulfed the length and breadth of the war-torn countries.

Apart from the above, the inclination of some of the men to possess more than one spouse is something that cannot be denied, although if it were to arise as a result of carnal desires, it is not to be taken into regard. A wife's inability to conceive and the husband's intense desire to have a child provide a rational support to such an inclination. There may be instances where the inability of the wife

to satisfy the intense sexual desires of the husband leaves him with no alternative except to turn towards a second marriage – at times even compelling him to resort to illegitimate means to achieve his objective in the absence of legitimate ones. Hence, in cases such as these, his inclination cannot be regarded as being illogical or irrational. It is for this reason that even in countries that prohibit polygamy, in reality, relationships with several women are widely prevalent whereby one male tends to have illicit relationships with several women at the same time.

The well-known French historian Gustav Lebon considers the issue of Islamic polygamy, which is bound and limited by conditions, to be one of the distinguishing features of this religion. Comparing it with the free and illicit relationship of a male with several females in Europe, he states: In the West too, despite the fact that the weather and natural environment do not warrant such a custom (polygamy), monogamy is something that we come across only in books of law! For, I do not suppose that the presence of traces of this custom, in our actual socialization, can be denied! Honestly, I am at a loss and fail to comprehend what the legal, but confined, polygamy of the East lacks in comparison to the phoney polygamy of the West? In fact, I declare that the former is better and more seemly than the latter, in every respect.¹⁰¹

Of course it is not to be denied that some of the so-called Muslims, without taking into regard the Islamic ideology behind this rule, have sought to misuse it, maintaining ignominious harems for themselves and violating the rights of their wives. This flaw is not in the law but rather in the individuals themselves, and their deeds should not be regarded as the laws of Islam. Is there any law, which, despite its excellence, is not put to misuse by profiteering individuals for their personal benefit?

¹⁰¹ *Le Civilisation des Arabes (Tārīkh-e-Tamaddun-e-Islām Wa Arab)*, translated by Fakhri Gilaani, pg. 509

Question: At this juncture some may question that if women find themselves in the abovementioned circumstances; would they be permitted to take two husbands for themselves too?

The answer to the above question is not very difficult:

Firstly: (Contrary to what is popular among the general public) the sexual desire in men is several times more than that in women; books relating to sexual issues state frigidity to be the disorder which is prevalent in the majority of women whereas, in the case of men, it is just the opposite. Even with respect to animals it has been observed that sexual advancements are usually initiated by the males of the species.

Secondly: Polygamy, in the case of men, does not entail any social or legal complications whereas, if the women were to possess two husbands, it would lead to numerous problems - the simplest of them being the issue of genealogy of the child, for it would not be known to which of the husbands it belongs, and such a child would certainly not be cared for and supported by any of the husbands. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that a child, whose father's identity is unknown, tends to be less loved and cared for by the mother. Thus, such children find themselves deprived and denied with respect to love and affection, and unclear about their legal rights.

It may perhaps be unnecessary to mention that resorting to contraceptives such as pills or the like can never yield certainty or confidence that a child will not be conceived, for there have been innumerable instances where women, who have used them or made mistakes while using them, have conceived children. Thus, no woman can, by trusting and relying upon such measures, take multiple spouses for herself.

Due to these factors polygamy, in the case of women, cannot be rational, whereas in the case of men, after observing its conditions, it is not only logical, but practical too.¹⁰²

23. What is meant by ‘justice’ as mentioned in the conditions (to be considered) with respect to polygamy?

In verse 3 of SūratulNisā, we read:

﴿فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً﴾

“...but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one.”

Similarly, in verse 129 of this same chapter, we read:

﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ﴾

“And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish (it).”

The question that arises here is: What is meant by ‘justice’ with respect to multiple wives? Is this ‘justice’ associated with issues of life like sleeping together, gifting items and things, and providing ease and comfort, or is it associated with respect to the heart and human sentiments too?

Without any doubt justice, with respect to affections and sentiments of the heart, is something that is beyond the control of man. Who possesses the ability to exercise total control over his affection – a state, which is governed by factors external to himself? It is for this reason that Allāh has not considered the observance of this kind of justice to be obligatory and in verse 129 of this chapter says:

¹⁰² *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 256

﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ﴾

“And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, (with respect to sentimental inclinations) even though you may wish (it).”

Thus, till such time that the internal sentiments do not result in granting preference to some of the spouses over the others in actions, it is not prohibited. What is obligatory upon a man is to maintain justice amongst the spouses with respect to issues that are practical and external in dimension.

From the above explanation it becomes plain that those, who have sought to correlate the above verse:

﴿فَإِنْ حَفِظْتُمْ إِلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً﴾

with verse number 129:

﴿وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ﴾

and thus conclude that polygamy is totally forbidden in Islam, have made a grave error. – They have argued that the first verse places the condition of ‘justice’, while the second verse considers this justice to be an impossible task for the men.,

As has been referred to previously, the kind of justice, whose observance is beyond the ability of man, is that which is associated with the internal sentiments, and this is not one of the requirements for polygamy; the condition for polygamy is the justice which is associated with acts and deeds.

Testifying to this aspect is the latter part of the verse 129 of this same chapter, which says:

﴿فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ﴾

“Now that you cannot observe justice with respect to your sentiments between your spouses, at least do not direct all your

sentimental inclinations towards one, leaving the other in suspense.”

Consequently, people who have taken one part of this verse and abandoned the other part, have erred in the issue of polygamy and it is a cause for astonishment for every researcher.¹⁰³

Incidentally, according to Islamic traditions, it appears that the first person to raise this objection was Ibn Abi al-‘Aujā - one of the materialists and a contemporary of Imam as-Şādiq عليه السلام - who argued over it with Hishām b. Ḥakam, the diligent Islamic scholar. Not finding the answer to it, Hishām started out from his city, Kufah, towards Madīnah and approached Imam as-Şādiq عليه السلام. The Imam عليه السلام was greatly astonished to see him in Madīnah at a time when it was not the season for Ḥajj and ‘Umrah. Hishām presented his question, whereupon the Imam عليه السلام said: “The justice intended in verse 3 of Sūratul Nisā is the justice associated with the maintenance of the spouses (and observation of their rights, and the manner of conduct and behaviour) whereas the justice in verse 129, which has been regarded as an impossible task, is the justice associated with internal sentiments (thus, polygamy, with adherence to the Islamic conditions, is neither prohibited nor impossible).”

After returning from his journey, when Hishām presented Ibn Abi al-‘Aujā with the answer he swore that it was not Hishām’s answer but somebody else’s.¹⁰⁴

It is quite evident that if we are interpreting the term ‘justice’ differently in the two verses it is because of the clear context that is present in both the verses. The verse under discussion clearly states: Do not direct all your inclinations towards one spouse, and has thus permitted the selection of two spouses, but on the condition that, despite the difference in internal inclinations, no injustice should be

¹⁰³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 255

¹⁰⁴ *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, vol. 1, pg. 420

done to the other with respect to actions and deeds. Besides, the initial portion of verse 3 of this same chapter expressly permits polygamy.¹⁰⁵

24. What is the philosophy behind temporary marriage?

It is a general and universal rule that if man's natural impulses are not satiated in the correct manner, he will resort to incorrect and devious means in order to satiate himself. In reality, the natural desires cannot be eliminated; and upon the supposition that they could be eliminated, such an act would not at all be rational for then it would be tantamount to opposing the laws of Creation.

Thus, the correct option would be to satiate them in a rational manner and utilize them constructively.

It cannot be denied that sexual desire is one of the strongest natural impulses existing within man to the extent that some of the psychoanalysts are of the opinion that it is the only primitive and primary impulse within man while all the other impulses are secondary in nature.

Now, in numerous circumstances and environments, a great number of individuals belonging to a particular age-group are unable to enter into a permanent marriage, or married individuals, who have embarked upon protracted journeys or other commitments, are faced with the dilemma of their sexual desires remaining unfulfilled. This issue has become especially acute in our times wherein the matrimonial age, due to the protracted period of education and other intricate social issues, has gone up and rarely can a youth enter into wedlock at a lower age during which he faces a period of heightened sexual tendencies.

What should be done in such circumstances?

Should the people be encouraged to suppress this impulse (like the monks and the nuns)?

¹⁰⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 155

Or should they be left free to indulge in profligacy, and the ignominious and scandalous scenarios that presently exist be permitted?

Or that we should adopt a third alternative – one, which neither brings about the problems of a permanent marriage nor leads to sexual licentiousness?

In summary, permanent marriage, in itself, has never been able to cater to the sexual needs of all the sections of the society - neither in the past nor today. We stand at a crossing - either to permit 'prostitution' (just as the material world of today has endorsed it and has officially recognized it) or accept the idea of temporary marriage. Those who oppose both prostitution as well as temporary marriage have not presented a solution for this problem.

The blueprint of temporary marriage neither possesses the strict conditions that are associated with permanent marriage so as to be inharmonious with educational engagements or lack of financial affluence, nor does it lead to the harmful ways of sexual wantonness and prostitution.

Criticisms levelled against temporary marriage

However, there are certain objections and criticisms that need to be discussed, albeit concisely:

1. At times it is asked, what is the difference between 'temporary marriage' and 'prostitution'? Both of them can be considered to be prostitution in exchange for a certain sum of money. This kind of marriage is, in fact, a veil over prostitution and sexual pollution! The only difference between the two lies in the recitation of two simple sentences (recitation of the marriage formula.)

Answer: Those who make this criticism apparently do not have any awareness about the concept of temporary marriage. This is because temporary marriage, like permanent marriage, is governed by rules and ordinances. A woman entering into a temporary marriage must make herself available solely for this husband for the entire

duration of the marriage, and must necessarily observe the 'Iddah after the termination of the term. In other words, she has to refrain from entering into any kind of matrimony with any other male for a period of forty five days at least, so that it becomes clear in case she bears the child of the first person. The observance of this 'Iddah is obligatory upon her even if she had resorted to the use of contraceptives to prevent conception. If she happens to conceive, this child like the children that result from a permanent marriage, would have to be looked after and supported by the man, and all the rules that are associated with children would come to be associated with this child too. However, prostitution does not have any of these rulings associated with it. Can these two issues ever be compared with each other?

Of course, temporary marriage does differ from permanent marriage with respect to the issues of inheritance (between the temporary spouses)¹⁰⁶, maintenance, and some other rulings; however these differences do not place it on par with prostitution. In any event, temporary marriage is a form of marriage which possesses its own ordinances and stipulations.

2. Temporary marriage becomes a reason for some lustful individuals to misuse this ruling and use it as a pretext to indulge in every kind of prostitution and profligacy; consequently respectable individuals never enter into it while women of good repute tend to avoid it.

Answer: Is there any law in the world that has not been abused? Should a rule, which is a social requirement and is in accordance with the human innate, be suppressed because of it being misused, or should those, who misuse it, be taken to task?

Supposing some individuals misuse the pilgrimage to the House of Allāh and engage themselves in peddling drugs in the course of

¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the children resulting from a temporary marriage do not differ in any manner whatsoever from those resulting from a permanent marriage.

their trip; should the people be prevented from participating in this great Islamic congregation or should those, who misuse the occasion, be brought to justice?

If we observe that nowadays respectable individuals experience an aversion with respect to this Islamic statute, the fault lies not in the statute but in those who act upon it, or to put it more correctly, in those who misuse it. If, in our present day society, temporary marriage were to be portrayed in its correct form and the Islamic government were to implement it under the governance of specific rules and stipulations, not only would its misuse be prevented but even respected individuals (during social exigencies) would not experience an aversion towards it.

3. They say: Temporary marriage results in guardian-less individuals, such as illegitimate children, being handed out to the society.

Answer: In view of what we have mentioned previously, the answer to this objection is quite plain since according to (man-made) law, illegitimate children are neither affiliated to the father nor to the mother whereas children resulting from temporary marriage do not possess the slightest difference from those that result from permanent marriage - neither with respect to inheritance nor with respect to social rights and privileges - apparently this objection stems from their lack of attention towards this reality.

Russell and temporary marriage

In conclusion it appears expedient to present what Bertrand Russell, the well-known English scholar, has stated in his book *Marriage and Morals* under the topic *Trial Marriage*. After mentioning the scheme of Ben B. Lindsey, one of the judges for juvenile delinquency, in connection with 'companionate marriage', he states as follows:

"His view is that young people should be able to enter upon a new kind of marriage distinguished from ordinary marriage by 3 characteristics. First, that there should be for the time being no

intention of having children and that accordingly the best available birth-control information should be given to the young couple. Second, that so long as there are no children and the wife is not pregnant divorce should be possible by mutual consent. And third, that in the event of divorce, the wife should not be entitled to alimony.”

After mentioning Lindsay’s idea, which was presented above, Russell goes on to state as follows: He holds, and I think rightly, that if such an institution were established by law, a very great many young people, for example, students at universities, would enter upon comparatively permanent partnerships, involving a common life, and free from the Dionysiac characteristics of their present sex relations.¹⁰⁷

As you notice, the above plan with respect to temporary marriage is in many ways similar to the Islamic concept of temporary marriage except that the conditions and stipulations which Islam has laid out for it are more lucid and perfect in various respects. In the Islamic temporary marriage there is no prohibition in preventing conception, separation is simple and alimony too is not obligatory.¹⁰⁸

25. Did temporary marriage exist during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ?

The general consensus of the Islamic scholars indicates that temporary marriage was lawful during the initial period of Islam and, in fact, the essentials of religion too emphasize this lawfulness - (and the difference of opinion that exists in connection with verse 24 of Sūratul Nisā):

¹⁰⁷ Marriage and Morals, pg. 84

¹⁰⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 341

﴿فَمَا اسْتَمَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً﴾

“Then as to those whom you profit by, give them their dowries as appointed.”

as to whether or not it establishes the legitimacy of mut‘ah does not, in any way, serve to oppose the incontrovertible nature of the statute. This is because even the opponents are of the belief that the legitimacy of this statute has been established by means of the sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ – and the Muslims, during the initial stages of Islam, even acted upon this ruling. Also, the famous sentence that has been reported from ‘Umar:

مُتَعَاتِنَ كَانَتَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنَا مُحَرَّمُهُمَا وَأَعَاقِبُ عَلَيْهِمَا
مُتَعَةُ النِّسَاءِ وَمُتَعَةُ الْحَجِّ.

“Two mut‘ahs existed during the time of the Prophet of Allāh and I prohibit them and shall punish (those who act upon them), (and these are) mut‘ah of the women and Ḥajj of Tamattu’), is a clear proof of the existence of this statute during the period of the Noble Prophet ﷺ; however, the opponents of this ruling claim that it was abrogated and prohibited later on.”¹⁰⁹

Interestingly, the traditions which they present to substantiate their claims of abrogation are contradictory and inconsistent. Some traditions state that the Noble Prophet ﷺ himself abrogated this statute and as such, the nullifier of this ruling would be the sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Other traditions state that it was abrogated by the verse of Divorce:

¹⁰⁹ *Kanz al-‘Irḫān*, vol. 2, pg. 158. In *Tafsīr Qurṭubī* and *Tafsīr Tabarī*, a tradition similar to the abovementioned tradition has been mentioned. It has also found a mention in ‘The Chapter Of Nikah’ in vol. 7 of *Sunan of Beḥāqī*.

﴿لَعَدَّتْهُنَّ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلَقُوهُنَّ﴾

“O Prophet! when you divorce women, divorce them for their prescribed time.”

However, it ought to be known that this verse has no connection with the issue under discussion since this verse deals with divorce whereas there is no divorce in a temporary marriage - the separation taking place when the term (of marriage) reaches termination.

On the one hand, it is conclusively and categorically known that this ruling was lawful during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ while on the other hand there is authentic evidence to prove that it had been abrogated. Thus, according to an indisputable law, proved in methodology, we shall judge that this statute continues to exist.

The well-known sentence of ‘Umar is also a clear testimony of the fact that this ruling had certainly not been abrogated during the period of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

It is quite evident that none, except the Noble Prophet ﷺ, possesses the authority to abrogate laws and rulings, and it is only he ﷺ, who can abrogate and annul certain laws in accordance with divine orders. After the Noble Prophet’s death, the door to abrogation of laws was completely closed or else every person, according to his individual reasoning, would seek to abrogate portions of the divine laws and consequently there would be no such thing as an eternal and everlasting Shari‘ah. Fundamentally, individual reasoning vis-à-vis explicit sayings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ lacks validity and authenticity.

Significantly, in the book *Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī*, which is one of well-known *Ṣiḥāḥ* of the Ahlus Sunnah, and also from *al-Daraqutnī*¹¹⁰, we are informed of the following incident:

¹¹⁰ *Tafsīr Qurṭubī*, vol. 2, pg. 762, under verse 195 of *Sūratul Baqarah*.

Once, an inhabitant from Syria approached ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar and questioned him about Ḥajj-e-Tamattu‘, whereupon he expressly declared it to be permissible. The man said: “But your father has prohibited it!” ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar turned furious and said: “If my father prohibits it while the Noble Prophet ﷺ permits it, should I forsake the sacred sunnah of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and follow my father’s statements? Arise and go away from my presence!”¹¹¹

Another tradition, possessing the same form as that seen in the above tradition, has also been reported from ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar, but in connection with temporary marriage.¹¹²

It has been reported from the book ‘Muhādhirāt’ of Rāghib that one of the Muslims entered into a temporary marriage. He was asked: “Who informed you that it was legitimate?” He replied: “‘Umar!” Astonished, they asked him: “How is such a thing possible when ‘Umar has himself prohibited it and has even threatened to punish the people for it?” He said: “I too base my reasoning upon this, for ‘Umar had said: ‘The Noble Prophet ﷺ had permitted it but I prohibit it.’ I accept its legitimacy from the Noble Prophet ﷺ but shall never accept its prohibition from anyone else!”¹¹³

Another point that needs to be mentioned here is that those, who claim that this rule has been abrogated, face some serious problems:

Firstly: In numerous traditions from Sunni sources it has been explicitly stated that this ruling had not been abrogated during the

¹¹¹ The Mut‘ah of Ḥajj that ‘Umar had prohibited was the Ḥajj-e-tamattu‘. Ḥajj-e-Tamattu‘ is that initially a person enters a state of iḥrām and after performing the rites of ‘Umrah comes out of his iḥrām, (whereupon everything, even sexual intercourse, becomes permissible for him) after which, he once again goes into the state of iḥrām and performs the rites of Ḥajj from the 9th of Dhul Hijjah. In the Age of Ignorance, the people considered this to be incorrect and would be given to astonishment over the fact that a person, having entered Mecca during the season of Ḥajj, performs his ‘Umrah and comes out of his iḥrām, before having performed his Ḥajj. But Islām expressly declared such an act to be lawful and this has been asserted in verse 186 of Sūratul Baqarah.

¹¹² *Sharh Lum‘ah*, vol. 2, ‘The Book of Nikah’

¹¹³ *Kanz al-‘Irfān*, vol. 2, pg. 159 (footnote)

life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ but, rather, its prohibition came into effect during the time of ‘Umar. Thus, the proponents of abrogation need to provide an explanation for all these traditions, which are twenty four in number. ‘Allāmah Aminī has mentioned them in detail in volume six of his book *al-Ghadīr* and two examples of them are presented below:

1. It has been reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī* that Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī said: “During the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ we used to easily enter into temporary marriage and this continued till ‘Umar totally prevented ‘Amr b. Ḥārith from entering into it.”¹¹⁴

2. In the books *Muwatta* of Mālik and *Sunan Kubrā* of Behaḳī it has been reported from ‘Urwah b. Zubaīr that one day, a lady by the name of Khaulah Bint Ḥakīm approached ‘Umar and informed him that one of the Muslims, Rabī b. Umayyah, had committed mut‘ah. Hearing this ‘Umar said: “Had I prohibited this act previously, I would have had him stoned (but now, from this very moment, I shall prohibit it).”¹¹⁵

In the book *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid* of Ibn Rushd al-Andulusī too we read that Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī said: “Temporary marriage was customary and usual amongst us during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and (the first) half of the caliphate of ‘Umar. Afterwards ‘Umar prohibited it.”¹¹⁶

Secondly: The traditions that state that this ruling had been abrogated during the life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are ambivalent and contradictory in nature. Some of them say that it was abrogated in the battle of Khaibar, some report it to have been abrogated on the day of the conquest of Makkah, some others specify that it was during the battle of Tabuk, while yet others declare that it took place during the battle of Autās, etc. Thus, all of

¹¹⁴ *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, pg. 206

¹¹⁵ *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 6, pg. 210

¹¹⁶ *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid*, The Book of Nikāh

these traditions, which advocate the abrogation of this ruling, appear to be fabricated as they differ so vastly from each other.

In view of what we have mentioned above, it becomes plain that the statement of the author of the commentary al-Manār, when he says: “Previously, in the third and fourth volume of the magazine al-Manār, we had expressly stated that it was ‘Umar, who had prohibited mut‘ah, but later we happened to come across some traditions, which indicated that it had been abrogated during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and not during the time of ‘Umar, and accordingly, we rectify our previous statements and seek forgiveness for it¹¹⁷ is a prejudiced declaration. This is because vis-à-vis these contradictory traditions that declare the abrogation to have taken place during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we have traditions, which expressly declare the ruling to have continued till the time of ‘Umar. Thus, neither is there a necessity to apologize nor a need to seek forgiveness; the evidences presented above indicate that it was the original declaration of the author that had been true and correct, and not his second one!”

It is evident that neither ‘Umar nor anyone else - not even the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt ؑ, who are the genuine successors of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - can abrogate laws that had existed during the life-time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Basically, abrogation after the death of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the termination of revelation is absolutely meaningless and inconceivable. It is also a matter of immense astonishment that some individuals attribute the utterance of ‘Umar to his ‘individual reasoning’ (ijtihād), for ijtiḥād vis-à-vis ‘naṣṣ’ (explicit text of the Noble Prophet ﷺ) is neither permissible nor acceptable.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 5, pg. 16

¹¹⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 337

26. What is the philosophy behind Muḥallil?

After the third divorce, the man and the woman must separate from each other forever; however, if the woman enters into matrimony with another man and, after the consummation of this marriage, procures divorce from him, she can then marry the first husband again if she so desires. The question which arises here is: What is the philosophy behind this Islamic ruling?

In specific circumstances divorce, like marriage, becomes a crucial and essential issue and it is for this reason that Islam has permitted it. But, since division and break-up of families tend to inflict irreparable harm on the individuals and the society, Islam adopts various means in order to prevent the occurrence of divorce to the maximum extent possible - the issue of 'another marriage' or muḥallil being one of these means.

This is because a woman's official marriage with another man, after having been divorced three times, is a great deterrent for pronouncing repetitive divorces (on the part of the husband). A man who intends to divorce his wife for the third time knowing fully well that with this divorce she would get married to someone else, forever, would find his conscience being pricked and, till the time he is certain that there exists no other alternative, he will not embark on such an act.

In reality, the issue of muḥallil or to put it more correctly, 'a woman's second permanent marriage with another man' is an impediment placed before capricious and deceptive males so that they do not take women to be playthings for their wanton desires, and misuse the ruling of 'divorce and return'.

The conditions stipulated for this second marriage - one of them being that it should be a permanent marriage - indicate that this second alliance has not been stipulated for the purpose of providing the woman and the first husband with an opportunity to get

together again; thus, this ruling cannot be misused by entering into a temporary marriage in order to remove the impediment.

A tradition, which some of the commentators have mentioned, serves to greatly elucidate the point. According to this tradition those, who misuse this ruling by arranging a marriage alliance so that the woman, by means of this marriage, can return to her first husband, are distanced away from Allāh's mercy.

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْمُحَلِّلَ وَالْمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ.

“Allāh curses the ‘muḥallil’, and the person for whom this person has endeavoured to act as a ‘muḥallil’.”¹¹⁹

Thus, it ought to be said that the objective is to separate the man and the woman after three divorces by means of this marriage, so that each of them can lead a life as desired by him or her and to prevent matrimony - an issue, extremely hallowed - from occasionally becoming a victim of the satanic inclinations of the first husband.

However, since Islam has always respected rational and logical desires, and utilizes every reformative opening that exists, it says: If this (second) alliance happens to break down too and the former spouses develop attachment with respect to each other and have seriously resolved to fulfil their familial responsibilities, there is no harm if they come together. This new marriage lifts the prohibition from over them and this is why it has been named as ‘muḥallil’.

It therefore becomes clear that muḥallil has not been presented in Islam as just an issue or a ruling but rather it speaks of a new marriage, a concept which, in addition to the Qur’anic verse, is also inferred from the traditions of the infallibles عليهم السلام.

After studying the issue, another point which comes to the fore is that the issue of new marriage is serious and in sincere earnest. But if someone, from the very outset, had not intended to marry the

¹¹⁹ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 2

woman permanently, only enacting a role in order to present an appearance of a muḥallil (so that the woman acquires the excuse to return to her former husband), such a marriage would serve no purpose since in such a case, not only would the second marriage be null and void but in addition, the first husband would also never become legitimate for the woman and the previously mentioned tradition:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْمُحَلِّلَ وَالْمُحَلَّلَ لَهُ.

probably alludes to this kind of muḥallil.¹²⁰

27. What is the philosophy behind the observance of 'Iddah?

In verse 228 of Sūratul Baqarah, we read:

﴿وَالْمُطَلَّقاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ﴾

“And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three courses.”

The question that crops up here is: What is the philosophy behind this Islamic ruling?

Since the breaking up of families generally tends to inflict irreparable damage upon the fabric of a society, Islam has set stipulations which, till the maximum possible limit, seek to prevent such matrimonial break-ups. On the one hand it regards divorce as ‘the most abominable of the permissible acts’, while on the other hand, by referring the matrimonial disputes to the family courts established by the relatives, and initiating reconciliatory measures through the relatives of the disputing spouses, it has sought to prevent this occurrence.

One of these stipulations, which is itself a cause for delaying the divorce and weakening this matrimonial break-up, is the

¹²⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 123

observance of 'Iddah - the duration of which has been set to be three (قراء), which means to become clean, three times, from menstruation.

'Iddah - A means for reconciliation and return

At times, due to certain factors, the mentality of a person comes to possess such a state that a small dispute inflames feelings of revenge so intense as to blanket the intellect and conscience, and predominantly, the division of a family occurs in these circumstances. However, it frequently happens that a short while after the dispute the husband and the wife come to their senses and repent for their actions, especially when they realize that they would have found themselves in great difficulty had their family broken up.

It is here that the verse, under discussion, states: The women must observe 'Iddah and remain patient till this wave passes by and the dark clouds of strife and animosity disperse from the skies of their lives.

In particular, the stipulation of Islam asking a woman to refrain from going out of the house during the period of 'Iddah serves to stimulate the faculty of reflection within her and is very effective in the betterment of her relationship with her husband.

And it is for this reason that we read in the first verse of Sūratul Ṭalāq:

﴿ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهُ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴾

“Do not drive them out of their houses, nor should they themselves go forth, unless they commit an open indecency; and these are the limits of Allāh, and whoever goes beyond the limits of Allāh, he indeed does injustice to his own soul. You do not know that Allāh may, after that, bring about reunion.”

Usually, reminiscence of the warm and sweet moments of the life before divorce is sufficient to bring back the lost love and brighten the dimmed light of affection.

‘Iddah - A means to protect the generation

Another philosophy behind the ‘Iddah is to make a woman cognizant of her state with respect to pregnancy. It must be admitted that although witnessing one phase of menstruation is usually indicative of absence of pregnancy in a woman, at times it has been observed that a woman, despite bearing a child, menstruates in the initial phase of her pregnancy and hence, in order to be absolutely sure that she does not bear a child from her previous husband, it has been ordered that she should witness three periods of menstruation after which she can enter into another marriage.¹²¹

¹²¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 106

PHILOSOPHY BEHIND SOME OF THE PROHIBITED ACTS OF ISLAM

28. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of gambling?

It is very rare to find someone who is not acquainted with the various harms of gambling, and in order to further explain this fact, we present here, briefly, some of its evil consequences:

Gambling - The Premier cause of agitation and excitement

All psychologists are of the opinion that mental agitation and excitement is the principal cause for many diseases. For example, reduction in (body) vitamins, ulcers of the stomach, insanity, mild and severe nervous and psychological disorders and the like, often arise as a result of excitement - and the premier cause that brings about such excitement is gambling. An American scholar has stated: In this country alone, more than two thousand individuals die every year due to excitement and agitation arising as a result of gambling, and on average, the heart of a poker-player beats in excess of a hundred beats a minute. At times, gambling also triggers cardiac and cerebral apoplexy and is undoubtedly a factor which brings about early ageing.

Apart from what scholars have stated, a person who engages in gambling, finds that not only is his soul subjected to tension but also the tracts of his body come to possess an unusual and atypical state - his heartbeat increases, sugar level in the blood rises, there occurs a disruption in the secretion of the internal glands, the colour of his face pales and he suffers from a lack of appetite. Upon conclusion of the gambling bout and subsequent to a tensed battle of nerves he goes to bed, predominantly resorting to alcohol and drugs in order to soothe his nerves and calm his body. Therefore, the harm arising as a result of these ought to be added to that which arises directly as a consequence of gambling.

Another scholar has said: A gambler is a diseased person, who is in need of constant psychological attention. An effort should be made to make him comprehend that there exists a psychological vacuum, which propels him towards this reprehensible act, so that he embarks upon treating himself.

Connection between crime and gambling

One of the world's largest organisations dealing in statistics has established that thirty percent of all crimes are directly related to gambling, and it is also one of the factors which bring about seventy percent of offences.

The economic harms of gambling

During the course of a year, huge amounts of money are lost as a result of gambling, aside from the numerous man-hours that go down the drain as a result of it – even losing the enthusiasm to work during the rest of the time. For example, it has been stated in one report that in the city of Monte Carlo - one of the well-known gambling centres of the world - a person, in a gambling spree spread over a period of 19 hours, lost a sum of 4 million Iranian tumans. When the casino shut its doors he proceeded straight towards the woods where he shot himself in the head. The reporter adds that the woods of Monte Carlo have repeatedly witnessed incidents of suicides on the part of such devoted gamblers.

The social harms of gambling

Many gamblers, owing to the fact that they occasionally turn up winners and possibly pocket thousands of other people's money within a short time, are not inclined to enter into economic and manufacturing work as a result of which, the wheels of economy and production tend to become crippled in the corresponding ratio. If we inspect meticulously, we would realise that all the gamblers and their families are a burden upon the society, not only because they do not contribute the slightest benefit to it but, on the

contrary, they exploit it for their own benefit and at times resort to theft to make good the losses incurred by them during gambling.

In short, the evils of gambling are in such great measure that many of the non-Islamic nations have prohibited it by law, although they may extensively indulge in it in practice; for example, England prohibited it in 1853, the Soviet Union did so in 1855, the United States implemented the prohibition in 1854 while Germany followed suit in 1873.

At the end of this discussion it is interesting to note that according to statistics compiled by some researchers, 90 percent of all pick-pocketing instances, 10 percent of moral offences, 40 percent of assaults, 15 percent of sexual abuses, 30 percent of divorces and 5 percent of suicides are brought about by gambling.

If we were to present a definition for gambling, we would have to state: Gambling means sacrificing wealth and honour, for acquiring the riches of others by means of deception and craftiness, or, at times, for recreation - but not attaining either of the two objectives.¹²²

29. What is music and what is the philosophy behind its prohibition?

There exists no difficulty and difference of opinion as far as the issue of prohibition of music is concerned, however, the difficulty lies in differentiating and discerning what constitutes music.

Are all pleasant and melodious sounds music?

Undoubtedly, this is not the case for it has been reported in the traditions that the Qur'an and the adhān should be recited in a pleasant and melodious voice; in addition, the conduct of the Muslims too indicates likewise.

Is every such sound, which possesses tarjī (coming and going of sound in the larynx, or technically speaking, rolling of the sound in it), music? This too is not established.

¹²² *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 76

The conclusion that can be drawn from the statements of the (Shī'ite) jurists and the Sunni scholars is that joyful tunes that are bacchanalian, frivolous and futile in nature are regarded as music.

Expressing it more clearly, tunes that are commensurate with immoral gatherings, and with corrupt and sinning individuals, are classified as music.

In other words a tune, which stirs up the carnal passions within man and he, in that state, considers consumption of intoxicants and indulgence in sexual depravity alongside that tune to be totally fitting and opportune, is called music!

It is significant to note that at times, in a composition, the tune is music and essentially futile, as are the wordings - like when inappropriate poems are recited in the company of a ravishing tune; at other times only the tune is music, like when Qur'anic verses, supplications or poems of a lofty standard are recited in a tune that is suitable to gatherings of the corrupt ones. Both forms are prohibited (take note).

It is also necessary to mention that at times, 'music' is looked upon as possessing two meanings - the general meaning and the specific one. The specific meaning is the meaning that we have presented above - tunes, which stir up passions within man and are connected to sinful gatherings. But the general meaning alludes to every pleasant and melodious sound, and it is for this reason that those, who view music in the general meaning, have divided it into two categories, lawful and unlawful music - lawful music being the melodious sounds, which do not incite immorality and are not associated with such gatherings, whereas unlawful music being the tunes, possessing the characteristics mentioned above.

Thus, as far as the prohibition of music is concerned, there exists no difference of opinion; the disagreement lies in the manner in which it is interpreted.

However, music, like every other concept, also possesses forms which are doubtful such that at times, a person fails to comprehend if a particular tune is associated with immoral gatherings or not. In such cases, on the basis of the Law of Barā'at, it is regarded as being lawful (of course, after possessing a sufficient awareness of the conventional meaning of this, there appears no reason to regard those heroic tunes and music, which are associated with battle, sports or the like, as unlawful).

Nevertheless, there are other aspects too that are related to this issue, such as exceptions to music, which have been claimed by some but rejected by others, and which need to be discussed in books of jurisprudence.

The final point which we feel ought to be mentioned here is that the discussion presented above was with respect to singing - however the issue of use of musical instruments and the prohibition associated with it is entirely different, and beyond the scope of our present discussion.

The philosophy behind the prohibition of music

A careful study of the meaning of music together with the conditions mentioned by us clearly elucidates the philosophy that lies behind its prohibition. A short study reveals the following evils associated with it:

1. Encouragement towards moral degradation

Experience, which is the best witness, has revealed that many individuals, influenced by music, have abandoned piety and turned towards lust and immorality. Musical gatherings are usually centres of various wrongdoings and it is music that serves to fuel these evils. According to some reports appearing in foreign newspapers, in a gathering of a group of girls and boys, a special music was played which induced so much excitement in them that they rushed towards each other and began indulging in such obscene acts that one is ashamed to even make a mention of them.

The commentary *Rūḥul Ma'ānī*, narrates that one of the elders of Bani Umayyah said to them: “Stay away from music for it reduces modesty, increases lust, shatters (one’s) personality, is a successor and substitute for intoxicants and leads to the same deeds, which arise out of intoxication.”¹²³

This goes to show that even they had perceived its evil. If the Islamic traditions have repeatedly stated that music fosters the ‘hypocritical soul’ within man, it is an allusion to this reality, for such an individual possesses a soul that has become polluted as a result of depravity and being distanced from piety. If the traditions also state that the angels do not enter into houses in which music is played, it is because of this pollution and uncleanness, for the angels are entities that are pure and seek purity.

2. Heedlessness with respect to the remembrance of Allāh

In some of the Islamic traditions, music has been interpreted to mean *lahw* (amusement, idle sport) – an allusion to the fact that music intoxicates a person in lust and passion to an extent that it makes him heedless of Allāh.

In a tradition from Imam ‘Alī عليه السلام we read:

كُلُّ مَا أَلْهَىٰ عَنِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ مِنَ الْمَيْسَرِ.

“Every thing that causes man to become unmindful of Allāh, (and drowns him in lust) is a gamble.”¹²⁴

3. The harmful effects upon the nerves

In reality, music is one of the important factors that cause narcosis of the nerves. In other words, at times narcotics enter the body through the mouth, just like alcohol; or by means of the faculty of smell, such as heroin; or as a result of injection, like morphine; or, at times, by means of the ears, such as music.

¹²³ *Tafsīr Rūḥul Ma'ānī*, vol. 21, pg. 60

¹²⁴ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 12, pg. 235

It is for this reason that, at times, certain forms of music lead people into such high spirits that they come to possess a state similar to intoxication; of course, there are also times when this state is not reached, but nevertheless it does induce a state of mild stupor. It explains why many of the evils of narcotics are also witnessed in music.

A close scrutiny of the biographies of celebrated musicians would reveal that, in the course of their lives, they slowly began to suffer from mental and psychological problems – some of them became patients of psychological disorders; some others, losing their aptitude and mental acumen, entered into the realms of lunacy and insanity; a group turned paralytic and helpless; and some others, while in the course of their musical performance, suffered sudden cardiac arrest due to an increase in blood-pressure.¹²⁵

Some of the books written in connection with the detrimental effects of music upon the human nerves, while mentioning the biographies of some of the distinguished and celebrated musicians and singers, state that in the course of their presentations, they suffered a sudden stroke and died instantly in that very gathering.¹²⁶

In short, the extent of the harmful effects of music upon the human nerves - leading to the frontiers of insanity, pressurising the heart and the blood, and other undesirable stimulations - are in such a measure that there is no need for any protracted discussion.

The statistics of deaths and fatalities reveal a great increase in sudden deaths in our era, as compared to the past; several causes for this phenomenon have been mentioned, one of them being the increase in song and music, globally.

Music – one of the tools of the colonialists

The world colonialists have always dreaded awareness on the part of the general masses - especially the youths – and hence, a part of

¹²⁵ *Tāthīr-e-Musiqī Bar Rawān Wa Aa'sāb*, pg. 26

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 92 onwards

their extensive programme for the continuation of colonialism focuses on submerging societies into unawareness and ignorance, and increasing unhealthy forms of amusement and entertainment.

Today, it is not just the commercial aspect which motivates the narcotics trade but rather, it is an important political tool in the politics of the colonialists. Establishment of prostitution centres, gambling clubs and other unhealthy forms of amusements are some of the other tools – one of the most important amongst these being the expansion of the song and musical domain; a tool, which they insist on utilizing for anaesthetizing people's thoughts and ideas. One can see why music occupies a major portion of the airtime on global radio services and is one of the principal items associated with the programmes of mass media.¹²⁷

30. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of fornication?

1. Fornication leads to the occurrence of turbulence within the familial mechanism and severance of the bond between fathers and children - a bond, whose existence not only occasions social recognition but is also responsible for the support for the child and for laying the foundations of love, which causes this support to continue all throughout the individual's lifetime.

In short, in a society containing a great number of illegitimate and fatherless children, the social ties, which are governed by familial connections, become highly unstable.

To comprehend the significance of this issue, it is sufficient to ponder for a moment that if fornication were to be declared lawful in the entire human society and the matrimonial system were to be uprooted from it, the nondescript children who would come into the world in such circumstances would not be supported by anyone - neither at the time of their birth nor as they are growing up.

Apart from this, they would be left deprived of the element of love, which plays a decisive role in curbing crime and violence.

¹²⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 17, pg. 22

Consequently, human society would be transformed into a society, totally beastly and replete with violence in every sphere and dimension.

2. This reprehensible act brings about various kinds of individual and social conflicts; stories about the state of affairs prevailing within localities of disrepute and centres of corruption are illustrative of the reality that horrendous crimes are committed alongside sexual digressions.

3. Experience has revealed and science has proved that this act is responsible for the dissemination of various diseases, and despite all arrangements made for the purpose of combating its effects; statistics reveal the extent to which people have lost and still lose the soundness of their health by means of it.

4. This act can result in the abortion of the foetus, the killing of children and the termination of lineage. This is because, such women are never willing to foster their children; basically, the existence of children is a great impediment for them, hampering them from continuing their evil acts, and hence they constantly strive to get rid of them.

The practical failure of the absolutely absurd hypothesis - that these children can be gathered in institutions under the supervision of the government - has become plainly evident for it has been established that it is extremely difficult to foster fatherless and motherless children in this fashion. Besides, the result is often totally undesirable - nondescript, hardhearted and criminal children, lacking in everything!

5. It should not be forgotten that the objective of marriage is not just to satiate the sexual desire; rather, partnership in leading one's life, spiritual intimacy, mental tranquillity, nurturing the children and collaboration in every aspect of life, are some of the effects of marriage - none of which are attainable without confining a man and a woman to each other and prohibiting other women.

In a tradition, Imam ‘Alī عليه السلام says¹²⁸: “I have heard the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم say: “Fornication possesses six evil effects, three of which are (seen) in the world while three are (seen) in the Hereafter.

As for those that are (seen) in this world: It robs away the purity and the illumination from man, severs his livelihood and hastens his end.

And those (seen) in the Hereafter are: The wrath of Allāh, the severity of the Reckoning and the entry - or permanence of stay - in the fire of Hell.”¹²⁹

31. What philosophy governs the prohibition of homosexuality?

Notwithstanding the fact that in the West, where sexual uncleanness is extraordinarily excessive and such indecencies are not regarded as reprehensible, the spread of such indecencies can never serve to diminish the hideousness associated with them, and their moral, psychological and social evils continue to exist as before (it has been heard that in some of the countries like England this issue has been legalized on the basis of a law that has been, with great impudence, ratified by parliament).

At times, some materialists who are tainted with such uncleanness, in an effort to justify their acts, state: We have not come across any medical prohibition in connection with it!

But they seem to have forgotten that fundamentally, every kind of sexual deviation tends to affect all the mental and physical structures of human existence, disrupting its balance and equilibrium.

Explanation: Man, by nature, possesses a sexual inclination towards the opposite sex - this inclination being one of the most fundamental of human impulses and one, which guarantees the continuation of his lineage. Any act that serves to divert this

¹²⁸ *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, pg. 414

¹²⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 12, pg. 103

inclination from its natural course generates a disease and brings about a psychological deviation within man.

Neither a male, who possesses inclination towards the same sex nor one, who indulges in such an act is a complete male. Books dealing with sexually related issues mention homosexuality as one of the most dominant of deviations.

Continuation of this act gradually kills one's sexual inclination towards the opposite sex and the person indulging in such acts tends to develop feminine sentiments, eventually coming to suffer from an excessive sexual debility, technically referred to as frigidity, such that after a period he loses the ability to perform natural sex (sexual intercourse with the opposite sex).

In view of the fact that sexual sentiments of a man and a woman influence their physical organisation as well as the moral and mental conditions specific to them, the harmful influence upon a person's body and soul as a result of losing their natural emotions is all too evident. It is even possible that individuals, suffering from such a deviation, come to acquire a measure of sexual debility to the extent that they lose the ability to procreate.

These individuals are usually psychologically unsound and, experiencing a sense of strangeness with respect to their own selves and also with respect to the society in which they live, gradually lose their willpower (a precondition for every kind of success) causing a kind of indifference to creep into their souls.

If they do not resolve to mend their ways soon, refuse to seek the help of a medical practitioner or a psychologist despite the need for it and this act transforms itself into a habit for them, it would be extremely difficult for them to abandon it. Nevertheless, it is never too late to give up this obnoxious habit - what is required is resolution and application.

In any event, this mental vagrancy gradually leads them towards drugs, intoxicants and other moral deviations and this is another great calamity.

Interestingly, the Islamic traditions have alluded to these evils by means of short but pithy expressions. A person once questioned Imam as-Şādiq ؑ “Why has Allāh prohibited sodomy?” The Imam ؑ replied: “Had sex with boys been lawful, the men would have become independent of women (and disinclined towards them) causing man’s lineage to become terminated and natural heterosexual intercourse to come to an end, and this would have brought about great moral and social evils.”¹³⁰

Significantly one of the punishments, stipulated by Islam for individuals who practice these acts, is that it is forbidden for the ‘doer’ to marry the sister, mother or daughter of the person, subjected to sodomy. That is, if the act were to occur before marriage, these women would become forbidden for him, eternally.¹³¹

32. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of (consumption of) liquor?

There are many reasons for this prohibition including the following.

Effects of alcohol upon age

A distinguished Western scholar claims that for every 51 deaths amongst youths aged between 21 and 23 years who are addicted to alcoholic beverages, there are not even 10 deaths amongst those youths not addicted to alcohol.

Another reputed scholar has proved that a significant number of 20 year-old youths, who are expected to live up to the age of 50 years, do not live beyond 35 years as a result of consumption of alcohol.

¹³⁰ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 14, pg. 252

¹³¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 9, pg. 194

According to experiments conducted by 'life insurance' companies, it has been established that the life-span of those addicted to alcohol is 25 – 30 percent less than that of those not addicted to it.

Another statistic reveals that the average age of those addicted to alcohol is between 35 years and 50 years, whereas the average age of non-addicts, when hygienic and sanitary issues are observed, is above 60 years.

The effects of alcohol upon the offspring

If a person happens to be intoxicated at the time of conception, 35 percent of the acute alcoholic effects are passed on to the child and if both - the husband and the wife - were to be intoxicated, 100 percent of the acute effects are transferred to the child. In order that the effects of alcohol on children are better comprehended, we seek to present some statistics here:

Of the children having been born prematurely, 45% of them had fathers and mothers, both of whom were alcoholics, 31% had mothers who were alcoholics and 17% had fathers who were alcoholic.

6% of infants, who died shortly after birth, had alcoholic fathers while 45% of them had alcoholic mothers.

75% of children possessing stunted growth had parents who were addicted to alcohol while 45% of them had mothers who were addicted to it.

Amongst the children who suffered from a lack of sufficient intellectual and mental abilities, 75% of them had alcoholic mothers while 75% of them had alcoholic fathers.

Effects of alcohol upon the morals

Attachment towards the family and the love for the wife and children diminishes so much in an alcoholic person that it has been repeatedly observed that fathers have killed their children with their own hands.

The social harms of alcohol

Statistics compiled by The Legal Medical Institute of the city of Neon in 1961 of social crimes reveals that alcoholics were involved in 50% of all of homicide cases, 77.8% of violence and physical abuses, 88.5% of thefts, and 88.8% of sexual offences. These figures reveal that an overwhelming majority of crimes and offences are perpetrated under the influence of alcohol.

The economic harms of alcoholic drinks

A celebrated psychiatrist says: Unfortunately, the governments only take into consideration the monetary and tax benefits derived from alcohol but fail to consider the enormous funds spent to rectify its evils. If the governments were to take into account the increased psychological sicknesses in the society, the losses of a decadent society, the waste of precious time, the driving accidents resulting from intoxication, the corruption of generations, the laziness, idleness and nonchalance, the cultural backwardness, the troubles faced by the police, the reformatories for the guardianship of alcoholic children and the hospitals for them, the judicial setup to look into crimes committed by the alcoholics and the prisons to house the offenders, and other losses that stem from the consumption of alcohol, collectively, they would realize that the income derived from the taxes imposed on alcoholic drinks is nothing compared to the above-mentioned losses. Besides, the deplorable consequences of alcohol consumption cannot be gauged in terms of just money, for death of near ones, breaking up of families, lost ambitions and loss of intellect can never be compared to money.

In summary, the harms of alcohol are so numerous that according to one scholar, if the governments guarantee to close down fifty percent of the public houses, it can be guaranteed that we would not be in need of fifty percent of the hospitals and asylums. (Even) if the alcoholic drinks trade were to be profitable for man – upon the assumption that the forgetting of his sorrows and a few moments of

insensibility could be viewed as a benefit for him – nevertheless, its harms are so much more immense, extensive and protracted that the two just cannot be compared.¹³²

At this juncture, we present some other points in the form of statistics in connection with the enormous consequences of this harmful act:

i. According to statistics published in England in connection with delirium tremens, when this condition was compared to other forms of insanity, it was found that as opposed to 2249 cases of delirium tremens, there were only 53 cases of insanity which were caused by other factors!¹³³

ii. Figures procured from American asylums indicate that alcoholic patients constitute 85% of those suffering from psychological disorders.¹³⁴

iii. An English scholar by the name of Bentham writes: “In northern countries, alcoholic beverages make a person fatuous and imbecile, while in the southern countries, it makes them insane. He then adds: The religion of Islam has prohibited all kinds of alcoholic drinks and this is one of the distinctive features of Islam.”¹³⁵

iv. If statistics were to be compiled of those, who, in intoxication have committed suicides, perpetrated crimes, destroyed houses and dashed the aspirations of families, the figures would be truly staggering.¹³⁶

v. In France, 440 people die as a result of alcohol, everyday!¹³⁷

vi. According to another piece of data, deaths in the United States resulting from psychological disorders in a period of one year are twice that of the casualties suffered by it during World War II, and

¹³² *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 74

¹³³ *Symposium on Alcohol*, pg. 65

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Tafsīr Tantāwī*, vol. 1, pg. 165

¹³⁶ *Dāiratul Ma'ārif-e-Farid Wa Judai*, vol. 3, pg. 790

¹³⁷ *Balāhā-e-Ijtīmā'ī-e-Qarn-e-Mā*, pg. 205

according to researchers, alcohol and cigarettes play a pivotal role vis-à-vis psychological disorders in that country!¹³⁸

vii. According to statistics published by an individual by the name of Huger on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the magazine Sciences, 60 percent of intentional murders, 75 percent of violent and physical abuses, 30 percent of immoral acts (including incest with the immediate relatives!) and 20 percent of thefts are related to alcohol and alcoholic drinks. According to another set of figures compiled by this same scholar, 40 percent of juvenile offenders have an alcoholic record.¹³⁹

viii. From the economic point of view, in England itself, the losses incurred every year as a result of absenteeism on the part of employees due to alcoholism has been estimated to be around 50 million dollars, which, by itself, is sufficient for the building of thousands of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools.¹⁴⁰

ix. As per statistics published in connection with the losses arising as a result of alcoholic beverages in France, alcohol burdens the French budget by 137 billion francs per year (not including the personal losses incurred by the individuals), details of which are as follows:

60 billion francs spent towards courts and prisons.

40 billion francs expended for social benefits and charities.

10 billion francs utilized for covering the expenses of the hospitals for alcoholics.

70 billion francs for maintaining social security!

Thus, it becomes plainly clear that the number of psychologically diseased individuals, hospitals, homicides, violent disputes, thefts,

¹³⁸ *Majmua'-e-Intishārāt-e-Nasl-e-Jawān*

¹³⁹ *Symposium On Alcohol*, pg. 66

¹⁴⁰ *Majmua'-e-Intishārāt-e-Nasl-e-Jawān*, 2nd year, pg. 330

offences and accidents are directly proportional to the number of public houses that exist.^{141 and 142}

33. What is the philosophy that governs the prohibition of (consumption of) pork?

A pig, even for the Europeans who principally consume pork, is a symbol of dastardliness, and is an animal that is filthy and squalid. This animal, in sexual issues, is extraordinarily nonchalant and reckless, and apart from the effects of its meat upon the temperament - an issue that has been scientifically established - its effects, especially with respect to recklessness in sexual affairs, are clearly observed.

The prohibition of the consumption of pork had been proclaimed in the Sharī'ah of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ too, while in the Gospels the sinners have been likened to the pig, which, in the course of anecdotes, has been declared to be the personification of the Satan.

It is a matter of great astonishment that some people still insist on eating its meat despite witnessing with their own eyes that on the one hand its nourishment is usually filth - at times consuming its own excrement - while on the other hand it is also plain for everyone to see that the meat of this dirty animal contains two forms of a dangerous parasite by the name of trichina and one form of the parasite taenia.

A single trichina is capable of spawning 15,000 times within a period of one month and causes within man various diseases such as anaemia, vertigo, diarrhoeal fever, rheumatic pains, nervous stress, internal itching, accumulation of fat, exhaustion and extreme lassitude, breathing problems, difficulty in chewing and swallowing food etc.

¹⁴¹ *Nashriya-e-Markaz-e-Mutāla'eh-e-Peshraftha-e-Iran* (about alcohol and gambling)

¹⁴² *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 5, pg. 74

One kilogram of pork is likely to contain 400 million trichinae and perhaps this was the reason that, some years back, consumption of pork was prohibited in some parts of Russia.

Truly, the religion whose rulings acquire newer manifestations with the passage of time is the religion of Allāh - the religion of Islam.

Some people assert that by present day means it is possible to eliminate all these parasites and make pork devoid of them, but even upon the supposition that use of sanitary equipments or cooking of meat at high temperatures completely eliminates all the parasites, nevertheless the harms associated with pork cannot be denied for according to the incontrovertible law referred to earlier, the meat of every animal bears the traits of that animal and, by means of the glands and the hormones secreted by them, influences the conduct of those, who consume it. Thus, consuming pork may transfer the attributes of sexual depravity and indifference towards the affairs of the womenfolk of the family - the most blatant traits of the male members of this species - into the person who consumes it.

And perhaps, one of the reasons for the excessive sexual profligacy dominant in the West could be consumption of the meat of this sordid animal.¹⁴³

34. What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of sexual intercourse during menstruation?

Copulating with women in this state, in addition to being revolting, also entails great harm and this is a fact that has also been corroborated by present-day medical studies. Some of the harms are: Possible occurrence of infertility in the man and the woman, creation of an environment conducive to the development of microbes of sexual diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea, inflammation of the female genitals, entry of the menstrual matter - replete with microbes from within the body - into the male reproductive organ and several other detriments, which are

¹⁴³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 586

mentioned in books of medicine. It is for this reason that doctors prohibit sexual intercourse with such women.

The bleeding during menstruation is related to the congestion of the uterine vessels and the flaking of its mucus; the ovaries too are in tune with these vessels in this act of congestion.

Almost contemporaneous to menstruation the female ovule passes through the fallopian tube and enters the uterus so that, in the eventuality of the arrival of the male sperm, the two, in collaboration with each other, can form the embryo.

Initially, the abovementioned blood discharge is colourless and irregular but soon becomes red and regular till, near its conclusion, it once again becomes light in colour and slips into irregularity.¹⁴⁴

Basically, the blood that is discharged every month during menstruation is the blood that gathers in the internal uterine vessels for the presumptive nourishment of the embryo. We do know that every month a woman's uterus produces one ovule and simultaneous to this the internal vessels, gearing themselves up for the purpose of nourishing the embryo, become replete with blood. If the ovule, having entered into the womb after having passed through the fallopian tube, encounters the male spermatozoid, an embryo is formed and the blood present in the vessels is utilized for its nourishment. But if not, the blood, as a result of flaking of the womb's mucus and the rupturing of the walls of the vessels, gets discharged from the womb in the form of menses.

Thus, it becomes plainly apparent as to why copulation in such a state is detrimental and prohibited. The womb, during this discharge, does not possess any kind of natural preparedness to accept the spermatozoid and thus comes to suffer harm.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *I'jāz-e-Qur'ān*, pg. 55, 56

¹⁴⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 92

35. What is the philosophy for the prohibition of marriage with one's 'immediate relatives'?

In verse 23 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ
وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمْ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ
مِنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمْ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِنْ
نِسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ
الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

“Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers’ daughters and sisters’ daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in, but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you (in marrying them), and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.”

The question that arises here is: What is the philosophy behind the prohibition of marriage with one’s maḥārim?

In this verse allusion has been made towards the maḥārim - meaning the ladies with whom marriage is forbidden - and on the basis of it, we can conclude that there are three ways by which this relationship can come into existence:

1. By birth – This is referred to as ‘genealogical relationship’.
2. By matrimony – This is referred to as ‘causal relationship’

3. By suckling – This is referred to as ‘foster relationship’

Foremost, alluding to the maḥārim by birth, who constitute seven groups, the verse says:

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ
وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ﴾

“Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers’ daughters and sisters’ daughters.”

It should be noted that the term ‘mother’ does not intend only the lady, who directly gives birth to a person but also includes the paternal and maternal grand-mothers and great grand-mothers. Similarly, ‘daughter’ does not mean the direct daughter only, but also includes the grand-daughters and the great grand-daughters, and similarly so with the other five groups.

Even though unsaid, it is clear that all the people (except for a very few), experience a sense of revulsion and reprehension towards such a marriage, and even the Magi, who in their ancient books have permitted these marriages, today reject them.

Although there are some people who strive to present the issue as one having its origins in an ancient habit and custom, it should be borne in mind that a habit or a custom can never be eternal and universal, for we know that if a law is found to exist universally amongst all the individuals of the human species and all throughout the ages, it generally reveals that the law is in conformity and agreement with the innate nature of man.

Apart from this, today the reality has been established that marriage between consanguineous individuals entails numerous dangers such as manifestation and aggravation (not generation) of latent and hereditary diseases. There are some people who, apart from the maḥārim, do not even approve of marriages between

relatively distant relations, such as first cousins, and are of the opinion that such alliances tend to accentuate the dangers of hereditary diseases¹⁴⁶. Nevertheless, if this issue does not create problems with respect to distant relatives (and usually it does not), it is surely bound to create problems with respect to the immediate relatives, amongst whom the ties of consanguinity are more intense.

Besides, generally there does not exist a sexual attraction and appeal amongst the maḥārim, since they mostly grow up together and thus appear common and ordinary to each other – rare and exceptional cases cannot form the criterion for general and universal laws - and we know that the existence of sexual attraction is a condition for the consolidation of a matrimonial alliance. Thus, if marriage were to take place between the maḥārim this alliance would be weak and unstable.

Then the Qur'an mentions the maḥārim that come into existence by way of suckling, and says:

﴿وَأُمَّهَاتِكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتِكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ﴾

“...And your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters.”

Although the Qur'an, in this portion of the verse, has only mentioned two groups from this category – the mothers and the sisters –according to numerous traditions, those who become maḥārim as a result of suckling are not confined to these two groups only. The well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ states:

¹⁴⁶ Nonetheless, in Islam, marriages between first cousins have not been prohibited since such marriages are not akin to marriages with the maḥārim and the likelihood of occurrence of eventualities in them is lesser. We ourselves have been witness to numerous instances of such marriages and the children that have resulted from them have been physically healthy and intellectually gifted.

يَحْرَمُ مِنَ الرِّضَاعِ مَا يَحْرَمُ مِنَ النَّسَبِ.

“All those, who become prohibited by means of genealogy, also become prohibited by means of suckling.”

Of course, there are numerous details and particulars associated with the measure of milk-feed and the manner and conditions of feeding (the child) which bring about this relationship, and these have been mentioned in books of jurisprudence.

The philosophy behind prohibiting marriage with such maḥārim is that the bones and flesh of the child develop as a result of the milk of the person and subsequently, the child comes to develop a resemblance with the (actual) children of the person. For example, if a woman suckles a child in a measure that its body develops and grows as a result of her milk, a kind of resemblance comes into existence between this child and the other (real) children of the woman. In reality, each of them come to be regarded as a part of the woman and are like brothers who are related by birth.

In the final phase the Qur’an, alluding to the third kind of maḥārim, classifies them into three categories:

- a) ﴿...and mothers of your wives﴾. As soon as the formula of marriage is recited and a woman gets married to a man, her mother, grand mother etc, all become eternally prohibited for the man.
- b) ﴿...and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in﴾. Just a mere recitation of the marriage formula does not make the woman’s daughters, obtained from a previous husband, prohibited for the husband – rather, the condition is that in addition to the recitation of the formula, the marriage should also be consummated. The presence of this condition in this case endorses the fact that the ruling in the case of the wife’s mother, mentioned in the previous sentence, is not bound by this condition, and technically speaking, it strengthens the general nature of that ruling.

Although, apparently, the condition:

فِي حُجُورِكُمْ.

“...in your guardianship” gives the impression that if the woman’s daughter, borne from a previous husband, is not brought up by the husband, she is not forbidden for him, however, from the context of the traditions and the incontrovertibility of the ruling, it can be concluded that this condition is not, technically speaking, a precautionary condition but rather a pointer towards the reason for this prohibition. This is because such daughters, whose mothers embark upon a new marriage, are usually young in age and are mostly brought up under the care of the new husbands as if they were their own daughters. The verse states: These are, in reality, similar to your own daughters. Does a person ever marry his own daughter? The selection of the word رَبَائِبٌ which is the plural form of رَبِيَّةٌ –meaning ‘the one brought up’ – is also for this very reason.

Pursuant to this part, the verse, for emphasizing the issue, adds: if you have not engaged in sexual intercourse (with the woman) her daughters are not forbidden for you:

﴿ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ ﴾

c) ﴿...and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins.﴾ In reality, the expression مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ (of your own loins) has been employed so as to annul an incorrect custom of the Era of Ignorance. In those days it had been a common practice to select individuals and adopt them as one’s own sons; the people would adopt an individual, who was someone else’s son, as their own son and all the rulings that were associated with a real son would come to be associated with this adopted son. Accordingly they never married the wives of their adopted sons. In Islam, adoption and all the rulings (of the Age of Ignorance) associated with it have been regarded as totally baseless.

d) ﴿...and that you should have two sisters together﴾ i.e., marrying two sisters, at one time, is not permissible. Thus, there is no harm in marrying two or more sisters if the marriages were to take place at different times and after being separated from the previous sister.

Since it had been a common practice to take two sisters as wives at the same time and there were individuals, who had entered into such marriages, the Qur'an, after the abovementioned sentence, says:

﴿إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ﴾

﴿...except what has already passed...﴾; i.e. those, who have entered into such marriages before the revelation of this law shall not face chastisement, however they would now have to select and keep one of the two and leave the other.

The secret behind the prohibition of such marriages by Islam could be that two sisters, due to their genealogy and natural attachment, possess intense fondness for each other, however when they become rivals they are not able to preserve and maintain the former affection for each other and consequently, a kind of emotional conflict manifests within them, which is detrimental for them. This is because the impulse of 'affection' and that of 'rivalry' are in a state of perpetual conflict within them.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 3, pg. 326

THE NOBLE QUR'AN

36. Has the Qur'an been altered?

The popular opinion amongst the Shi'ite and Sunni scholars is that no alteration has taken place in the Qur'an, and the Qur'an that is in our hands today is the very same Qur'an that had been revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ - to the extent that not even a single letter or a word has been added to it or deleted from it.

Some distinguished Shi'ite scholars - ancient and recent - who have explicitly attested to this reality, are:

1. Sheikh Ṭusī, renowned as Sheikh al-Ṭāifāh, who has presented a lucid, explicit and conclusive discussion on this matter at the beginning of his famed commentary, al-Tibyān.
2. Sayyid Murtaḍā, one of the most celebrated 4th century (Hijri) scholars of the Twelve-Imam sect.
3. The Chief of the Traditionists, Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābwaih al-Ṣadūq, while mentioning the beliefs of the Twelve-Imam sect, states: "Our belief is that no alteration has taken place in the Noble Qur'an."
4. The distinguished commentator al-Ṭabrisī too, in the introduction of his commentary, has presented a vocal discussion in connection with this issue.
5. Kāshif al-Ghitā, one of the eminent later-generation scholars.
6. Muḥaqqiq Yazdī, in his book al-'Urwatul Wuthqā, has reported the opinions of a great number of Shi'ite jurists regarding non-alteration of the Qur'an.
7. It has been reported that numerous other great scholars like Sheikh Muḥid, Sheikh Bahā'ī, Qadhi Nūrullāh and other Shi'ite scholars also harboured this belief and opinion.

Preponderantly, great and celebrated Sunni scholars too hold this belief.

It should be pointed out that some Shi'ite and Sunni scholars of Ḥadīth, whose knowledge with respect to the Noble Qur'an was deficient, have reported the occurrence of alteration in the Qur'an. Nevertheless, by means of explanations on the part of great scholars of both the sects, this false belief has been discarded.

Sayyid Murtaḍhā, replying to the book al-Masāil al-Tarablasīyāt, says: "The veracity of the Qur'an is so evident that (the certainty of) it is similar to (the certainty of) the knowledge that we possess with respect to the well-known cities of the world, great historical events and popular books."

In the aforesaid example, can a person ever harbour doubts about the existence of cities like Makkah, Madinah, London or Paris, even though he may have never travelled to these cities? Can one ever deny the Mongol invasion of Iran, or the French Revolution, or for that matter World Wars I and II?

Why can one not deny the above? It is because all these have reached us as a result of successive transmissions and narrations. Similarly the case is similar with the verses of the Noble Qur'an and we shall discuss this topic further a little later.

If biased individuals have attributed this belief to the Shi'ites with the intention of sowing discord amongst the Shi'ites and Ahlus Sunnah, the books of great and celebrated Shi'ite scholars are sufficient to prove false their claims.

It is not strange that a person like Fakhr Rāzī, who is known to us as a person displaying a particular bias and partiality with issues relating to the Shi'ites, under the discussion pertaining to verse 9 of Sūratul Hījr, says:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

"Surely, We have sent down the Reminder (the Qur'an) and surely, We (Ourselves) shall be its Guardian" is evidence to prove false the

claims of the Shi'ites that there has occurred alteration and addition and deletion in the Noble Qur'an!

It ought to be expressly stated that if his allusion is towards the great and renowned Shi'ite scholars and researchers, then it should be known that none of them have ever possessed such a belief and opinion; and if his allusion is towards a weak and an unauthentic view existing amongst the Shi'ites, a similar view is prevalent amongst the Ahlus Sunnah too - one, which is neither recognized by them nor by us.

The renowned researcher Kāshif al-Ghitā in his book *Kashf al-Ghitā* declares:

لَا رَيْبَ أَنَّهُ (أَيِ الْقُرْآنِ) مَحْفُوظٌ مِنَ النُّقْصَانِ بِحِفْظِ الْمَلِكِ الدِّيَّانِ كَمَا دَلَّ عَلَيْهِ صَرِيحُ الْقُرْآنِ وَإِجْمَاعُ الْعُلَمَاءِ فِي كُلِّ زَمَانٍ وَلَا عِبْرَةَ بِنَادِرٍ.

“There is no doubt that the Qur'an has been protected from any reduction (and alteration) as a result of Allāh's protection – as is indicated by the explicit statements of the Qur'an and the consensus of the scholars in every era; and any opposition (to this belief) by a handful of individuals carried no significance and authenticity.”¹⁴⁸

The history of Islam has seen numerous such inappropriate attributions, which only originate as a result of prejudice. We do know that the cause of some of these misunderstandings have been due to the enemies, who used to create such issues in an effort to ensure that no unity is established within the ranks of the Muslims.

The state of affairs reached such a stage that the renowned author from the Hijāz, ‘Abdullāh ‘Alī al-Qasīmi, in his book *al-Sirā*, while criticizing the Shi'ites, says:

¹⁴⁸ The commentary *A'īn al-Rahmān*, pg. 25

الشيعة هم أبدا أعداء المساجد و لهذا يقل أن يشاهد الضارب في طول بلادهم و عرضها مسجدا.

“The Shi'ites have always been the enemies of mosques and for that reason if a person were to travel the length and breadth of Shi'ite cities, he would come across very few mosques!”

Reflect hard! For here in the Shi'ite inhabited cities we tire ourselves counting the mosques which are found in the streets, bazaars, lanes and even by-lanes and at times there are so many mosques in one place that some people clamour out: Enough! Let us focus on other things too. Despite this we find this renowned author asserting things, which, for those of us residing in these regions, only serve to evoke laughter, and so what Fakhr Rāzī has ascribed to us should not cause too great an astonishment.¹⁴⁹

37. How is the Qur'an a miracle?

In connection with the greatness of the Noble Qur'an, we begin by quoting a few statements from some of the renowned personalities and also from those individuals, who have been accused of standing up to combat the Qur'an.

1. 'Abu al-'Alā Mu'arrī (accused of attempting to challenge the Qur'an) says: “It is a matter of consensus amongst all the people - Muslims and non-Muslims alike - that the book that Muḥammad ﷺ has brought, has subjugated the intellects and till today, no one has been able to bring forth the like of it. The style of this book does not tally with any of the styles that have been prevalent amongst the Arabs, such as oratory, 'rajaz'¹⁵⁰ poetry, rhymed prose of the clergy etc.

¹⁴⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 11, pg. 18

¹⁵⁰ A particular manner of reciting epic verses.

The superiority and the attraction of this book is of such high calibre that if one verse from it is placed amongst the words of others, it would shine out like a radiant star in a pitch-black night!”

2. Walīd b. Mughāīrah al-Makhzūmī – He was well known for his prudence and good management amongst the Arabs who used to benefit from his acumen and managerial skills to solve their social problems in the Pre-Islamic era. It was for this reason that he was called:

رَيْحَانَةُ قُرَيْشٍ.

“...the crème de la crème of the Quraish.”

When he heard the first few verses of Sūratul Ghafir from the Noble Prophet ﷺ he appeared in a gathering of the tribe of Banī Makhzum and said: “By Allāh! I have heard a speech from Muḥammad, which resembles neither the speech of humans nor that of the fairies.”

وَإِنَّ لَهُ لَحَلَاوَةً وَإِنَّ عَلَيْهِ لَطَلَاوَةً وَإِنَّ أَعْلَاهُ لَمُثْمِرٌ وَإِنَّ أَسْفَلَهُ لَمُعْدِقٌ
وَإِنَّهُ لَيَعْلُو وَلَا يُعْلَى.

“His speech possesses a special sweetness and an exceptional beauty. The top of it (like the fruitful branches of a tree) is full of fruits and the bottom of it is (like the roots of an ancient tree) firm and strong. It is a speech that shall prevail over everything and none shall prevail over it.”¹⁵¹

3. Thomas Carlyle, the renowned historian, in respect of the Qur’an says: “If we cast one look at this holy book, we observe that salient realities and characteristics of the secrets of existence have been so nurtured in its contents that its greatness and truthfulness becomes plainly manifest – and this is a great distinction, which is specific only to the Qur’an and not seen in any other scientific, political or financial work. Yes, some of the books do tend to deeply affect the

¹⁵¹ *Majma‘ al-Bayān*, vol. 10, Under *Sūratul Muddaththir*

mind of the reader - however, this just cannot be compared to the influence and effect of the Qur'an. As such, it must be said: "The fundamental distinction of the Qur'an and its basic tenets lies in its truthfulness, pure sentiments, salient topics and the important themes - none of which provide room for any kind of scepticism and uncertainty - and in the fact that it encompasses all the virtues and excellences that bring about human perfection and happiness, and very clearly defines and illustrates them all."¹⁵²

4. John Davenport - the author of the book, *An Apology for Mohammad and the Koran*, writes: "So exempt, indeed, is the Koran from these undeniable defects, that it needs not the slightest castigation, and may be read, from beginning to end, without causing a blush to suffuse the cheek of modesty itself."¹⁵³

He also says: "It is universally allowed to be written with the utmost purity and elegance of language in the dialect of the tribe of the Koreish, the most Noble and polite of all the Arabs, but with some mixture, although very rarely, of other dialects. It is, confessedly, the standard of the Arabian Language, and abounds with splendid imagery and the boldest metaphors ... and is generally vigorous and sublime."¹⁵⁴

5. Goethe, the German scholar and poet says: "The Koran is a work with whose dullness the reader is at first disgusted, afterwards attracted by its charms, and finally irresistibly ravished by its many beauties."¹⁵⁵

On another occasion, he writes: "For years on end priests, lacking cognizance of Allāh, had held us back from comprehending the realities of the Noble Qur'an and the greatness of the person who had brought it - Muḥammad ﷺ - yet, as we have treaded the path

¹⁵² From the introduction of the book *Sāzmānhā-e-tamaddun-e-Imparaturi-e-Islām*.

¹⁵³ *An Apology For Mohammad And The Koran*

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

of knowledge and science, curtains of ignorance and baseless prejudice moved aside from before us and very soon this indescribable book (Qur'an) attracted the world towards itself - profoundly influencing the knowledge and science of the world - eventually becoming the pivot of thoughts and ideas of the people of the world!"

He also says: "Initially we had turned away from the Qur'an but it was not long before this book attracted our attention towards itself leaving us baffled and amazed in a measure that compelled us to bow our heads in submission before its lofty and scientific laws!"

6. Will Durant - the famous historian says: "The Qur'an has generated within the Muslims such self-esteem, justice and piety that the like of it has not been witnessed in any region of the world."

7. Jules La Beaume - the French thinker and writer, in his book *An Explanation of the Signs*, states: "The people of the world came to acquire science and knowledge from the Muslims, who acquired them from the Qur'an, which is an ocean of knowledge, and caused streams (of knowledge) to flow from it in the world, for mankind..."

8. Another orientalist, writes: "It is mandatory for us to acknowledge that natural, astronomical, philosophical, mathematical sciences, which have seen a boom in Europe, are mainly due to the blessings of the Qur'anic teachings and as such, we are indebted to the Muslims - in fact, Europe, in this regard, is one of the cities of Islam."

9. Doctor Laura Veccia Vaglieri - a professor in the University of Naples - in her book *The Rapid Growth of Islam*, writes: "The divine book of Islam is one example of a miracle. It (Qur'an) is a book, which cannot be imitated. The style and modes of the Qur'an do not have any literary precedent. The influence that this style has upon the soul of man is a result of the distinctions and excellences that it

possesses. How can this miraculous book be a work of Muḥammad ﷺ, who had been an unschooled Arab?

In this book we observe treasures and reservoirs of knowledge which is beyond the ability and capacity of the most intelligent individuals, greatest philosophers and strongest political and legal personalities. And it is because of these aspects that the Qur'an just cannot be the work of an educated or a learned person."^{156 and 157}

One of the things which proves the authenticity of the Qur'an and its revelation by Allāh is the fact that there is no contradiction or discrepancy in the entire Qur'an. To understand this reality, consider the following explanation: The mentality of man is constantly in a state of change. The Law of Development - under normal circumstances - envelopes man, his thoughts and mentality, and with the passage of time, tends to change his ideas and speech. If we reflect carefully, we shall observe that the works of a writer are never similar and uniform; even in one book, the start and the end are seen to possess variations - especially so if a person finds himself in the midst of great and important events - events, which would establish the foundations of an all-encompassing ideological, social and doctrinal revolution. Such a person, however much he may try to maintain uniformity in his works, would never be successful - especially if he is unschooled and fostered in an environment that is totally backward and undeveloped.

However, the Qur'an, which has been revealed over a period of 23 years under various conditions, in various environments and in accordance with the corrective and educative needs of man, is a book which deals with a variety of topics. It is unlike other ordinary books that confine themselves to just one topic like politics, society, philosophy, law or history; rather, it is a book that, at times, talks

¹⁵⁶ *The Rapid Growth of Islām* - assistance has been taken from the book, *The Qur'an and the Final Prophet* for the above discussion in connection with the miracles of the Qur'an.

¹⁵⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 135

about Unity and the mysteries of creation, at other times about decrees, laws, customs and etiquettes, and on occasions about the past nations and their shocking histories, and about advices, admonitions, worship and man's relation with Allāh - and as Doctor Gustav Lebon puts it: "Qur'an, the divine book of the Muslims is not restricted to religious teachings only but also contains political and social rulings for the Muslims.

A book possessing such features would normally not be free of contradictions and discrepancies. However, when we witness that despite these aspects all its verses are in complete harmony with each other and without the slightest discrepancy, contradiction or asymmetry, we can safely surmise that this book is not a product of human thoughts, rather it is a book that has been sent down by Allāh, a fact which has been emphasized by the Qur'an itself."^{158,159}
and 160

Verses 12 to 14 of Sūratul Hūd once again stress the miraculous nature of the Qur'an and declare that this is not an ordinary speech and also not a consequence of human thoughts; it is a divine Revelation, which finds its origin in the Infinite Knowledge and Power of Allāh. For this reason it puts forth a challenge and dares the entire world to pick up the gauntlet and step forward to combat it (by bringing the like of it). In view of the fact that the contemporaries of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and all the communities that have existed, till today, have failed to stand up before this challenge - expressing their willingness to face every other difficulty in trying to put Islam down but shying away from endeavouring to combat the Qur'an by bringing the like of it - it is plainly evident that basically such a task was - and is - beyond the ability of man. And is miracle something other than this?

¹⁵⁸ *The Qur'an and the Final Prophet*, pg. 309

¹⁵⁹ *Sūratul Nisā*, Verse 82 (Tr.)

¹⁶⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 4, pg. 28

Even today, this call of the Qurʾan still rings in our ears and this eternal miracle still invites the entire world towards itself, challenging all the knowledgeable and scientific circles to combat it, not only with regards to eloquence - beauty and attractiveness of speech - but also with respect to its contents - sciences which, in that period, had been hidden from man; laws and rulings that guarantee prosperity and deliverance for the human species; statements and explanations that are free from contradictions, discrepancies and prevarications; historical accounts that are free from myths, exaggeration and idle talks - and the like.¹⁶¹

Sayyid Qutb, in his commentary, *In the Light of the Qurʾan*, has reported that some materialists, who had presented themselves at a convention of orientologists in Russia in 1954, in a bid to fault the Qurʾan, said: “This book cannot be the outcome of the thoughts and ideas of one man – Muḥammad – but it must be the result of the efforts of a large group of individuals! Moreover, it also cannot be believed that all of it had been written in the Arabian Peninsula, rather, it is certain that parts of it have been written outside it!”¹⁶²

They found themselves helpless - since they, on the one hand, on the basis of their reasoning which revolved around the rejection of the existence of Allāh and Revelation, always sought a material explanation for every thing, whilst on the other hand were unable to accept the Qurʾan to be the product of the thoughts of an individual within the Arabian Peninsula - they had no other option except to come up with this ridiculous theory of ascribing it to a group of individuals from within and outside the Peninsula - a notion which history rejects entirely.¹⁶³

38. Is the miracle of the Qurʾan confined to its eloquence only?

Without any doubt the miracle of the Qurʾan is not restricted to its extraordinary eloquence, beauty of speech and the conveyance of

¹⁶¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 9, pg. 42

¹⁶² *In the Light of the Qurʾan*, vol. 5, pg. 282

¹⁶³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 11, pg. 410

meanings - as some of the ancient commentators had believed - but in addition to this it is also a miracle with respect to the scientific facts contained within it, which it presented at a time when they were unknown. Furthermore, the rulings and the historical accounts were unadulterated by myths, superstitions and errors - without the existence of any kind of contradiction and discrepancy in them.

In fact, according to some commentators, the specific tone of the words of the Qur'an are also miraculous in nature.

Various interesting testimonies have been mentioned to support this claim, one of them being the following incident, which occurred with Sayyid Qutb, the renowned commentator, who states as follows:

I shall not narrate to you the incidents that have occurred with others but only that, which took place with me and had been witnessed by six people (five others in addition to myself).

We were six Muslims, who were traversing the Atlantic Ocean on an Egyptian ship, heading for New York. There were 120 passengers, but we were the only Muslims on board. On Friday we decided to offer our Friday prayers in the vessel that was in the middle of the Atlantic; in addition to performing our religious obligation, it was also our intention to present an exhibition of Islamic fervour and zeal before one Christian missionary, who continued with his missionary work even within the ship - especially since he was even keen to convert us to Christianity!

The captain of the ship, an Englishman, granted his approval that we establish the congregational prayers on the ship's deck and in addition, even permitted the ship's personnel, all of whom were Muslims from Africa, to join us in the prayers. They were overjoyed since this was the first time that the Friday congregational prayer was being offered on a ship.

I began reciting the sermon and led the congregational prayers and interestingly enough, the non-Muslim passengers had gathered around us, watching the performance of this Islamic obligation with interest.

After the completion of the prayers a large number of passengers came forward to congratulate us upon our performance of the religious obligation, but amongst them was a lady - a Christian from Yugoslavia, who, as we came to know later, had managed to escape from the horrors of Tito and Communism - who was extraordinarily influenced by the congregational prayers to the extent that tears flowed down her face and she could barely control herself.

She spoke simple English and in a voice which sounded greatly impressed and filled with a special humbleness and veneration. She asked us: "In which language did your priest orate?" (She was under the impression that the prayer must necessarily be established by a priest or a clergy as is the case in Christianity, but very soon we made her realize that every Muslim could perform this Islamic ritual.) We then informed her that we spoke in Arabic.

She said: "Despite the fact that I could not comprehend a single word of what you said, I could discern quite plainly that these words possessed a mystical resonance and tune. But more importantly and that which extra-ordinarily attracted my attention was that in the speech of your leader there were certain sentences, which appeared to be more distinguished and illustrious than the others, and they seemed to possess an exceptionally deep and influencing tone such that they induced tremors within my body. Surely, these sentences were something different. I think your leader, while delivering these sentences, had been filled with The Holy Spirit!"

After a little reflection we realized that these sentences were the verses of the Qur'an, which I had been reciting in the sermon and in the prayers. This issue shook us to the core and made us realize that the special tone and resonance of the Qur'an possesses such

influence and effect so as to tremendously influence and inspire a lady, who could not even comprehend a single word of it.^{164 and 165}

39. How do we know they have not brought the like of the Qur'an?

In verse 23 of Sūratul Baqarah we read:

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيَّ عَبْدَنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ﴾

“If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our Servant (Muḥammad), then produce a Sūrah (chapter) like it.”

The question that arises here is: How do we know that they have not brought the like of the Qur'an?

A look at the history of Islam would provide the answer to this question. This is because within the Islamic nations, during and after the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - even in Makkah and Madinah - there lived fanatic and stubborn Jews and Christians, who seized every opportunity to impair the strength of the Muslims. In addition, amongst the Muslims too there lived a group of pseudo-Muslims, whom the Qur'an has named as 'hypocrites' and who shouldered the responsibility of spying for the foreign powers (like the one which has been narrated in history regarding the monk Abū 'Amir and his cohorts from amongst the hypocrites of Madīnah, and the manner of their association with the Roman Empire, eventually resulting in the construction of Masjid al-Dhirār (Mosque of Dissension) in Madīnah and the occurrence of that peculiar incident, which the Qur'an has referred to, in Sūratul Taubah).

Undoubtedly, if this band of hypocrites and that group of hard-hearted enemies, who used to scrupulously follow the affairs of the Muslims and welcome anything and everything that could be used to the detriment of them, had managed to lay their hands upon such a book, they would have surely strived - to the maximum extent

¹⁶⁴ *In the Light of the Qur'an*, vol. 4, pg. 422

¹⁶⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 8, pg. 289

possible - to publicize it in order to overwhelm the Muslims, or they would have, at the very least, endeavoured to preserve it.

For this reason, history has gone on to record the names of even those individuals, about whom there could exist the remotest of possibilities that they might have endeavoured to combat the Qurʾan. Some of them are as follows:

The name of ‘Abdullāh b. Muqaffa’ has been mentioned in this regard and he is said to have written the book al-Durrah al-Yatīmah for this very purpose.

However, this book is presently with us and has even seen several editions in print but it does not contain the slightest indication or reference to suggest that it was authored for this purpose. We fail to comprehend how they have attributed this issue to him.

The name of the poet, Mutanabbi – Aḥmad b. Ḥusaīn Kūfī - is also included in this group and it is stated that he had claimed prophethood for himself. However there are numerous proofs, which indicate that his claims were probably more due to his highflying nature, a deprived family background and love for rank and position than anything else.

Abu al-‘Alā Muaʾrrī, has also been accused of this task, but despite the fact that stinging anti-Islamic statements have been narrated from him, he had never claimed to contest the Qurʾan; on the contrary, he has to his credit made interesting statements regarding the greatness of the Qurʾan.

However, Musāīlamah Kadhdhāb - from the region of Yamāmah - was indeed of those, who stood up to challenge the Qurʾan. He has authored some ‘verses’, which are more of a recreation and amusement than to deserve any serious attention. We present below a few sentences from them:

In opposition to Sūratul Dhariyāt, he has presented the following sentences:

و المبردات بذرا و الحاصدات حصدا و الناريات قمحا و الطاحنات طحنا و العاجنات عجنا و الخبزات خبزا و الثاردات ثردا و اللاقمات لقمها اهالة و سمنا

“By the peasants and the farmers! By the harvesters! By the separators of chaff from the wheat! By the separators of wheat from the chaff! By the makers of dough! By the bakers! By the soppers (those who crumble bread in broth)! By those who pick up the soft and oily morsels!”¹⁶⁶

يا ضفدع بنت ضفدع، نقي ما تنقين، نصفك في الماء و نصفك في الطين، لا الماء تكدرين و لا الشارب تمنعين

“O’ Frog the daughter of frog! Call out as much as you desire! Half of you in the water and half of you in mud; Neither do you make the water muddy nor do you prevent one from drinking the water!”¹⁶⁷

and ¹⁶⁸

40. What do al-Ḥurūf al-Muqatt‘ah (The Broken Letters) of the Qur’an mean?

In the beginning of 29 chapters of the Noble Qur’an we come across al-Ḥurūf al-Muqatt‘ah (the Broken Letters) and as the name implies, these letters appear to be broken up and separate from one another. They apparently do not seem to convey any meaning.

The Broken Letters have always been considered to be of the mysterious words of the Qur’an. Commentators have presented numerous and varied interpretations for them - new suggestions surfacing with the passage of time and as a result of new research and study on the part of scholars.

Interestingly, we do not find any mention in history that the Pagan Arabs or the polytheists had ever faulted and criticized the presence of these Broken Letters, located at the start of the numerous chapters of the Qur’an, or used their presence to ridicule the Noble

¹⁶⁶ *Ijāz al-Qur’an* of Rāfi‘ī

¹⁶⁷ *From The Qur’an and the Final Prophet*

¹⁶⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 133

Prophet ﷺ. This fact itself indicates that apparently even they were not completely ignorant of the mysterious nature of these Letters.

From amongst these interpretations, there are some which appear to be more significant and authentic than others, and are also in conformity with the results of the latest research performed in this regard. We dwell on some of the most important of these here:

1. These letters refer to the fact that this divine Book - with all its greatness, which has left all the Arab and non-Arab orators astounded (over its eloquence) and has left scholars helpless and incapable of opposing and challenging it - is composed of these very alphabets and letters, which everyone is aware of.

But, despite the fact that this Book is comprised of these very ordinary letters and alphabets, its words are so well-proportioned and symmetrical, and possess such lofty meanings that they penetrate into the very core of man, filling his soul with admiration and acclaim, and forcing minds and intellects to acknowledge its greatness. The disciplined order of its words and the construction of its sentences are of the highest degree, placing the loftiest of meanings into the moulds of the most beautiful of words, in a manner that has seen no parallel.

Another point that tends to corroborate this meaning is that in 24 of the chapters which begin with the Broken Letters, these letters have been immediately followed up by the mention of the Qur'an and its greatness, and this itself is indicative of the fact that there exists a relation between the Broken Letters and the greatness of the Qur'an. At this juncture we present a few examples of these, as follows:

﴿الر كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ﴾

“Alif Lam Ra (This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ *Sūrat Hud* (11), Verse 1

﴿ طس تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾

“Ta Sin. These are the verses of the Quran and the Book that makes (things) clear.”¹⁷⁰

﴿ ألم تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴾

“Alif Lam Mim. These are verses of the Book of Wisdom.”¹⁷¹

﴿ المص كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ ﴾

“Alif Lam Mim Suad. A Book revealed to you.”¹⁷²

In all of the above, as well as numerous other instances, the Broken Letters have been immediately followed up by the mention of the Noble Qur’an and its greatness.¹⁷³

2. Possibly, one of the objectives of these Broken Letters was to attract the attention of the listeners and to silence them and invite them to give ear. This is because the mention of these letters, in the beginning of a speech, was something strange and novel for the Arabs and would arouse their curiosity and consequently, they would listen to the speech following these letters. Incidentally, the majority of the chapters which begin with the Broken Letters are those, which have been revealed in Makkah and we do know that in Makkah the Muslims were in a minority, and the stubborn and obstinate enemies were loath to even listen to the words of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. At times they would create such uproar that the voice of the Noble Prophet ﷺ would be lost in the commotion - a fact that has also been alluded to in some of the verses of the Qur’an (like verse 26 of the chapter Fuṣṣilāt).

¹⁷⁰ *Sūratul Naml* (27), Verse 1

¹⁷¹ *Sūrat Luqmān* (31), Verse 1, 2

¹⁷² *Sūratul A’rāf* (7), Verse 1,2

¹⁷³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 61

3. In some of the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, it has been mentioned that these Letters are a kind of code and an allusion to the Names of Allāh. For example (المص) in Sūratul A'rāf alludes to:

أَنَا اللَّهُ الْمُقْتَدِرُ الصَّادِقُ.

Meaning, "I am Allāh, The Powerful, The Truthful." As such, each of the four letters is an abbreviated form for one of the Names of Allāh.

The act of substituting an extended form with an abbreviated version has been in practice since ancient times, although its use has assumed greater proportions in our times, for we observe numerous instances wherein elongated expressions and names of organizations have been condensed into a small and single word.

It is necessary to mention that these various interpretations for the Broken Letters are in no way contradictory to one another since it is possible for all of them to be intended together – viewing them as various latent and hidden meanings of the Noble Qur'an.¹⁷⁴

4. There is a possibility that all or at least some of these Broken Letters possess specific meanings – just as a word encompasses a meaning within itself.

Incidentally, we observe that numerous traditions and many commentators, in connection with the beginning of the chapters 'Ṭāhā' and 'Yāsīn', state that طه (Ṭāhā) is in the meaning of يَا رَجُلُ ('O' Man!'). In addition to this, we also come across certain Arab poems, some of which are probably associated with the period co-incident with the onset of Islam or even before it, in which the word 'Ṭāhā' possesses a meaning similar to "O' Man!" or something close to it.¹⁷⁵

As one reliable source has informed us, a few Western scholars involved in the study of Islamic issues have generalized this notion to include all the Broken Letters and are of the belief that these Letters, located at the start of the chapters, are words possessing a

¹⁷⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 6, pg. 78

¹⁷⁵ *Majma' al-Bayān* in the discussion regarding the first verse of the *Sūrat Ṭāhā*.

specific meaning, some of which have been pushed into oblivion with the passage of time, while others have managed to reach us. For otherwise, as they reason, it appears very improbable that the Arab polytheists would hear the Broken Letters, not comprehend their meanings and at the same time not use it as a pretext for mocking and ridiculing - and history has not recorded a single instance where these foolish cavaliers had ever used the Broken Letters as an excuse to react in this fashion.

Although it appears difficult to accept this theory, universally and with respect to all the Broken Letters, its applicability with respect to some of them is quite acceptable; however, this is an aspect that has been an object of discussion in the Islamic sources too.

It is interesting to note that in a tradition from Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام we read that ‘Ṭāhā’ is one of the names of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and means:

يَا طَالِبَ الْحَقِّ الْهَادِي إِلَيْهِ.

“O’ Seeker of The Truth (and) the guide to it.”

From this tradition it can be concluded that ‘Ṭāhā’ comprises of two cryptic letters: طا (Ṭā), which refers to:

طَالِبَ الْحَقِّ.

“Seeker of Truth”

and ها (Hā), which alludes to

الْهَادِي إِلَيْهِ.

“The guide to it.”

A final word in this regard is that the word طه (Ṭāhā) like يس (Yāsīn), with the passage of time, has gradually transformed into a proper name of the Noble Prophet ﷺ such that the children of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are also referred to as آل طه (The Children of Ṭāhā) as can

been seen in the case of Imam Mahdi ﷺ, who has been addressed as *يا بن طه* (O' Son of Ṭāhāl) in *Dua' al-Nudbah*.

5. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabāī رحمه الله has presented another possibility in connection with the meaning of the Broken Letters - one, which could be regarded as another interpretation for them. The summary of his view is as follows:

When we place the chapters beginning with the Broken Letters under careful scrutiny, we observe that the chapters which begin with the same kind of Letters, contain subject-matter that is similar in nature.

For example, in the chapters which begin with *حم* (Ḥā Mīm), these letters are immediately followed up by the sentence:

﴿ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ﴾

“Descended this Book (Qur'an) from Allāh.” or something similar in meaning.

In the chapters which commence with *الر* (Alif, Lām, Rā), these Letters are immediately followed up by the sentence:

﴿ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ ﴾

“These are the verses of the Book” or something similar to this.

In the chapters, which begin with *الم* (Alif, Lām, Mīm), these Letters are followed by the sentence:

﴿ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ﴾

“This is the Book, there is no doubt in it” or that which resembles this in meaning.

Thus, it can be speculated that there exists a special connection between the Broken Letters and the contents of the chapters in which these Letters are located - to the extent that, the content and the meaning of *Sūratul A'rāf* (for example), which starts with *المص*

(Alif, Lām, Mīm, Ṣād) is consistent with the contents and the meanings of the chapters that start with الم (Alif, Lām, Mīm) and the chapter ص (Ṣād).

However, it is possible that this relationship may be far too profound for it to be fathomed by any ordinary intellect.

If the verses of these chapters were to be placed alongside each other and subjected to a comparison, it is probable that a new meaning might become manifest for us in this regard.^{176 and 177}

41. Has the Qur'an attested the contents of the Torah and the Gospels?

In numerous verses of the Noble Qur'an we find the expression that 'the Qur'an attests the contents of the previous Books'.

In verse 48 of Sūratul Māidah, it says:

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ﴾

“And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book.”

This has caused some of the Jewish and Christian preachers to consider these verses as an authentication that the Torah and the Gospels have not suffered distortion and alteration, and to say: Undoubtedly, the Torah and the Gospels that are presently with us are not any different from what existed during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Thus, if there has been any alteration, it could only have occurred before the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. But since the Qur'an has attested to the veracity of the Torah and Gospels of the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ thus the Muslims should formally accept these divine, books as being unaltered and authentic.

Various verses of the Qur'an testify that the signs and attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his religion did exist in those distorted

¹⁷⁶ *Tafsīr al-Mizān*, vol. 18, pg. 5, 6

¹⁷⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 20, pg. 346

books, which were in the possession of the Jews and Christians then. This is because, the meaning of 'distortion' of those divine books surely does not mean that the entire books are false; rather, portions of the original Torah and the Gospels did exist in those books and still do, and the signs and attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ did exist within these books and/or other religious books which were in the possession of the Jews and Christians (and even today the glad tidings do exist in them).

Thus, the manifestation of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ and his divine Book, in practice, has attested all those signs and attributes since it is in conformity with them.

Hence, the meaning of the statement 'the Qur'an attests the contents of the Torah and the Gospels' is that the attributes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'an totally match and conform with what has been mentioned about them in the Torah and the Gospels.

The use of the word تصديق (attestation) in the meaning of مطابقت (conformity) is not restricted to this verse, but is also observed in other verses too, like verse 105 of Sūratul Şāffāt in which it is said to Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

﴿قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا﴾

"You have attested your dream" meaning: 'Your actions were in conformity with the dream which you had witnessed'.

And in verse 157 of Sūratul A'rāf, we read:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ﴾

"Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the Ummi, whom they find written down with them in the Taurat and the Injeel..."

Here, the meaning has been mentioned explicitly, i.e., ‘the attributes which they observe in him ﷺ match those that they have been found in the Torah.

In any case, the above verses only indicate on ‘the practical attestation’ of the Qur’an and the Noble Prophet ﷺ with respect to his ﷺ attributes present in the ancient books, and do not suggest that all the contents of the Torah and the Gospels have been affirmed. On the contrary, numerous verses of the Qur’an declare that they have altered and distorted the Torah and the Gospels, and this itself is a firm testimony for what has been stated above.¹⁷⁸

42. Was the Qur’an collected during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ or after him?

We do know that the name of the first chapter of the Qur’an is Fātiḥatul Kitāb, which means ‘the Opening (chapter) of the Book (Qur’an)’, and from various traditions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ it can be plainly concluded that this chapter had been familiar, by this very name, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ too.

From here we are led to a very important Islamic issue that is contrary to what is popular amongst a particular group, which is of the opinion that the Noble Qur’an existed in a scattered form during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and it was during the period of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar or ‘Uthmān that it was gathered together in the form of a book. The Qur’an, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, had been gathered together and possessed the same form and arrangement as we see it today – commencing with this same chapter of al-Ḥamd. If not for this, there exists no justification for it to be named as the Fātiḥtul Kitāb, for neither was it the first chapter to have been revealed to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and nor does there exist any other reason for it to be named so.

Various other evidences also exist, which serve to corroborate this reality that the Qur’an, in the form of a collection and assemblage as

¹⁷⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 210

it is in our possession today, had been collected during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and upon his orders.

‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm narrates from Imam as-Ṣādiq ؑ that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said to ‘Alī ؑ: “The Qur’an exists (in the written form) on pieces of silk, paper and the like, and are scattered (so) gather them together. The narrator then adds that ‘Alī ؑ departed from the gathering, collected them in a yellow cloth and put a seal upon it.”¹⁷⁹

وَ أَنْطَلَقَ عَلِيٌّ فَجَمَعَهُ فِي ثَوْبٍ أَصْفَرَ ثُمَّ خَتَمَ عَلَيْهِ.

Another testimony in this regard is that of the renowned Sunni scholar Khwarizmī, who, in his book *Manāqib*, reports from ‘Alī b. Riyāh that ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ؑ and Ubayy b. Ka’b collected the Qur’an during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

The third evidence is the statement of the renowned Sunni author Ḥākim, in his book *Mustadrak*, wherein he quotes from Zaid b. Thābit: “Zaid says: ‘We used to gather the Qur’an from the scattered pieces in the presence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and used to place them (the scattered pieces) in their respective positions according to his orders. However, these written works were still not in the form of a collection (and so) the Noble Prophet ﷺ ordered ‘Alī ؑ to gather them together in one place and asked us to be wary of losing or destroying it.’”

Sayyid Murtaḍā, the great Shi’ite scholar says: “The Noble Qur’an had been collected, in its present form, during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.”¹⁸⁰

Tabarānī and Ibn ‘Asākir narrate from Shu’bī that six persons from the Anṣār (Helpers) gathered the Qur’an during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ¹⁸¹ and Qutadah narrates: “I questioned Anas as to

¹⁷⁹ *Tārīkh al-Qur’an*, pg. 24 by Abū ‘Abdillāh Zanjānī

¹⁸⁰ *Majma’ al-Bayān*, vol. 1, pg. 15

¹⁸¹ *Muntakhab Kanz al-Ummāl*, vol. 6, pg. 52

who gathered the Qur'an during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he replied: 'Four persons, all of whom were from the Anṣār - Ubayy b. Ka'b, Mu'ādh, Zaid b. Thābit and Abū Zaid.'¹⁸² Apart from these, there are several other traditions too, but mentioning them would only serve to prolong the discussion.

In addition to these traditions that have been mentioned in the Shi'ite and Sunni sources, the selection of the name Fātiḥatul Kitāb for Sūratul Ḥamd is a living testimony for proving this issue.

ONE QUESTION

At this point the question that arises is: how can we accept what has been stated above when it is popular amongst some of the scholars that the Qur'an had been gathered after the Noble Prophet ﷺ (either by 'Alī ؑ or some other individual?

In answer to this, it must be said that what Imam 'Alī ؑ had collected was not just the Qur'an but, in fact, was a collection which comprised of the Noble Qur'an, its commentary, occasions of the revelations of the verses and other related issues.

As far as 'Uthmān is concerned, there exists a Qur'an, which indicates that he, in order to prevent discrepancies and differences with respect to the recitation of the Qur'an, endeavoured to prepare a common Qur'an, which possessed (a common) punctuation and manner of recitation (since till that time, punctuation had not been prevalent)

As for the insistence on the part of some, that the Qur'an had not been gathered at all during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and it was either 'Uthmān or the first or the second Caliph, who came to acquire this honour, it probably arises out of attempts to extol the virtues and excellences for them. As a result, we find that every group attributed this honour to a particular person and then narrated traditions in his favour.

¹⁸² *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī*, vol. 6, pg. 102

Basically, how is it conceivable that the Noble Prophet ﷺ would overlook such an important task, whereas he had been mindful of matters that were of much less significance? Is not the Noble Qur'an the Constitution of Islam, the great Book of training and education, and the basis for all Islamic concepts, notions and beliefs? Did the non-collection of the Noble Qur'an during the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ not entail the danger that parts of the Qur'an could be lost or marred and dissensions could arise amongst the Muslims over it?

Apart from this, the famous tradition of Thaqaḷain, which both the Shi'ites and the Ahlus Sunnah have narrated and in which the Noble Prophet ﷺ had said: "I leave behind amongst you two weighty things - the Book of Allāh and my Ahlul Bayt," itself proves that the entire Qur'an had been collected in the form of a book.

If we observe the traditions which indicate that the Qur'an had been collected by a group of companions under the supervision of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the fact that we differ in the number of individuals engaged in the task, should not be a matter of concern for it is possible that each of these traditions mentions only some of the individuals who had been engaged in the task of collecting and gathering the Noble Qur'an.¹⁸³

43. What are the 'clear' and the 'ambiguous' verses?

In verse 7 of the chapter Āle 'Imrān we read:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ﴾

"He it is Who has sent down to you (O' Muḥammad!) the Book, of it there are some clear Verses, these are the basis of the Book and others are ambiguous."

¹⁸³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 8

The question, which arises here, is: What is meant by the ‘Clear’ and ‘Ambiguous’ verses?

The word مُحْكَم has been derived from احكام which means ‘to prohibit’ and it is for this reason that fundamental and firm issues are called محكم, for they prohibit and repel away destructive factors from themselves. In addition, firm and conclusive talks and ideas, which keep away every possibility of contradiction from themselves, are referred to as محكم.

Thus, the Clear verses are those verses, whose meanings are so clear and manifest that there exists no need for any sort of discussion with respect to their meanings - such as the following verses...

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾

“Say: He Allāh is One (alone).”¹⁸⁴

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

“Nothing whatsoever (is there) resembling the like of Him.”¹⁸⁵

﴿اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

“Allāh (alone) is the Creator of all things.”¹⁸⁶

﴿لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ مِثْلِ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ﴾

“The male shall have the equal of the shares of two females.”¹⁸⁷

And thousands of other similar verses - dealing with issues relating to ‘Aqāid (beliefs), laws and rulings, preaching, history - are all Clear verses.

¹⁸⁴ *Sūratul Ikhḷāṣ* (112), Verse 1

¹⁸⁵ *Sūratul Shura'* (42), Verse 11

¹⁸⁶ *Sūratul Ra'd* (13), Verse 16

¹⁸⁷ *Sūratul Nisā* (4), Verse 11

These Clear verses have been named as Ummul Kitāb (Basis of the Book) i.e. they are the basis for the interpretation and explanation of the other verses.

The word مُتَشَابِه (which appears in the verse under consideration) basically means 'a thing, whose various parts are similar to one another'. For this reason, the sentences or words, whose meanings are ambiguous and at times appear to possess several meanings and possibilities, are called مُتَشَابِه. This is exactly what is meant by the Ambiguous verses of the Qur'an – for these are the verses of the Qur'an, which initially and at first sight appear to be ambiguous and possess several meanings (although, after taking into consideration the Clear verses, their meanings become evident and manifest.)

Although commentators have presented numerous possibilities in connection with the meaning of 'Clear' and 'Ambiguous' verses, what we have stated above is not only in total concordance with the original meaning of these two words, but also with the occasion of revelation of this verse, the various traditions which explain the verse and with the verse itself. This is because in the later portion of the abovementioned verse, we read that certain individuals always utilize the Ambiguous verses as their pretext (to promote their personal motives). It is evident that they misuse those verses, which at first sight appear to possess several meanings and interpretations, and this very fact conveys that مُتَشَابِه (Ambiguous) is in the meaning stated above.

The verses that speak of the Attributes of Allāh and the details of the Day of Judgment can be presented as examples of the Ambiguous Verses. Some of these verses are as follows:

﴿يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ﴾

“The hand of Allāh is above their hands”¹⁸⁸, which is regarding the Power of Allāh;

¹⁸⁸ *Sūratul Fath* (48), Verse 10

﴿ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

“And surely, Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing”¹⁸⁹, which refers to the Knowledge of Allāh;

﴿ وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴾

“And We shall set up the balances of justice on the Day of Judgment”¹⁹⁰, which speaks of the means of measuring the Deeds.

It is evident that neither does Allāh possess hands and ears (meaning a special limb or organ) nor are the Scales for measuring the Deeds similar to what we are accustomed to; rather these are expressions which refer to a universal concept and meaning for Power, Knowledge and Measurement.

It is necessary to mention that محكم and متشابه have also been used differently in the Noble Qur’an. In the first verse of Sūratul Hūd, we read:

﴿ كِتَابٌ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ﴾

“A book whose verses are firmly arranged (together).” In this verse, all the verses of the Qur’an have been characterized as محكم, denoting that all the verses of the Qur’an are interrelated and in complete harmony with one another.

In verse 23 of Sūratul Zumar we read:

﴿ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا ﴾

“A Book consistent (in its parts)”, which means ‘a book, all the verses of which are consistent and similar to one another with respect to correctness, veracity and authenticity’.

¹⁸⁹ Sūratul Baqarah (2), Verse 224

¹⁹⁰ Sūratul Anbiyā (21), Verse 47

From what we have stated with respect to the Clear and Ambiguous verses it is clear that a truth-seeking person, in order to comprehend the Speech of Allāh, has no option other than to place all the verses alongside each other and derive the truth and reality from them. If at first sight, he faces an intricacy and ambiguity in the apparent meanings of some of the verses, he should clear the vagueness by taking into consideration the other verses of the Qur'an thereby reaching the essence of the verses. In reality, the Clear Verses, from one perspective, are like highways while the Ambiguous Verses are like byways. It is apparent that if a person happens to lose his way in the byways, he endeavours to reach the nearest highway and find his way from there.

Reference to the Clear Verses as Ummul Kitāb (Basis of the Book) is yet another point which serves to corroborate this reality. The word Umm means 'basis' and 'origin' of a thing and this is why a mother is referred to as Umm, for she is the basis of a family and a shelter for the children in times of trouble and distress. Similarly, the Clear Verses are regarded as the basis, foundation and the mother of the other verses.¹⁹¹

44. Why are some of the verses of the Qur'an ambiguous?

Why is it that the Qur'an, despite being light and illumination, and a true and manifest speech and a book that has come for the guidance of the general masses, contains the Ambiguous Verses? Why are the contents of some of the verses vague, so as to be misused by those seeking to sow dissension and discord?

This is an issue which is immensely important and thereby calls for great attention. For the most part, it is possible that the following aspects could be reasons for the existence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qur'an:

a. Words and expressions, which are used by humans for the purpose of interacting with one another, have only been created to

¹⁹¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 320

fulfil the needs of their day-to-day lives; it is for this reason that when we step beyond the finite boundaries of this material world and the discussion dwells upon, for example, the Creator, Who is Infinite in every respect, we observe very clearly that our words do not possess the ability to hold and convey those lofty meanings. As a result, we are forced to utilize words, which are non-expressive in various aspects. This non-expressiveness and insufficiency of the words is the cause of a considerable portion of the Ambiguous Verses of the Qur'an. Verses like:

﴿يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ﴾

“The hand of Allāh is above their hands.”¹⁹²

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾

“The Beneficent (Allāh) on the ‘Arsh’ is firm.”¹⁹³

﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾

“Unto their Lord (they will be) attentive.”¹⁹⁴

and words like سَمِيعٌ (All-Hearing) and بَصِيرٌ (All-Seeing) are some examples of this category, whose meanings become clear and manifest upon consulting the Clear Verses.

Many of the realities (of the world of Existence) are related to the ‘other world’ or the metaphysical world – a realm, which is beyond the horizons of our thoughts - and being imprisoned in the dimension of time and space, we are unable to perceive the depths of those meanings. The loftiness of the horizons of these meanings and the inability on the part of our thoughts to comprehend such meanings become another reason for many of the verses to appear

¹⁹² *Sūratul Fath* (48), Verse 10

¹⁹³ *Sūrat Tāhā* (20), Verse 5

¹⁹⁴ *Sūratul Qiyāmat* (75), Verse 23

ambiguous - like some of the verses that deal with Qiyāmah and other similar issues.

This is exactly similar to the case of a person desiring to explain the issues of this world to an infant, who is in the embryonic stage in the womb of the mother. If the person does not speak, he has fallen short in his effort to convey the meaning, and if he does speak out, he has no alternative except to mention them in a general and implied manner, since the listener, in those circumstances, does not possess the ability to comprehend more than this.

c. Another of the secrets for the presence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qur'an is to put to work the mental and reflective machinery of man and to create within him the motivation to ponder and meditate. It is similar to the complex intellectual issues that are propounded to strengthen the mental faculty of scholars in order that they reflect more deeply and profoundly over issues.

d. A further aspect with regards to the presence of the Ambiguous Verses in the Qur'an - an aspect also corroborated by the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام - is that the presence of such verses serves to make apparent the people's intense need and dependence with respect to the divine Imams, prophets and their successors, and the reason that people flock towards these leaders in order to benefit from the knowledge and various forms of guidance that lie in their possession, and in this manner practically acknowledge their leadership. We can compare this with some of the academic books, which are formulated in a manner such that the explanation of some of the topics contained within them has been placed upon the teachers so that the students, experiencing a sense of dependency with respect to the teacher, do not sever their ties with him altogether, and as a result of this dependency acquire inspiration from his thoughts and ideas in all issues. In the case of the Qur'an, this is a confirmation of the famous testament of the Noble Prophet

ﷺ:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ عِزَّتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَ إِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا
حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

“I leave behind amongst you two Weighty Things; the Book of Allāh and my Progeny. And surely, the two shall not separate from one another till they come to me at the Pool.”^{195 and 196}

45. Is Bismillāh a part of (every) chapter?

Amongst the Shiʿite scholars there exists no difference of opinion in the fact that Bismillāh is part of Sūratul Ḥamd and every chapter of the Noble Qurʾan (except Sūratul Taubah as shall be mentioned later¹⁹⁷). Basically, the presence of Bismillāh in the beginning of all the chapters in the text of the Qurʾan is itself proof of this issue since we do know that nothing has been added to the text of the Qurʾan and the mention of Bismillāh, at the start of all chapters, has been prevalent since the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ till today.

However, as far as the Sunni scholars are concerned, the author of Tafsīrul Manār has presented a comprehensive collection of their views, which is as follows: “There exists a debate amongst scholars as to whether Bismillāh, at the start of every chapter, is a part of the chapter or not? The ancient scholars from Makkah - jurisprudents and the Qurʾan-Reciters alike - amongst them Ibn Kathīr; those from Kufah, amongst them the Qurʾan-reciters ʿAsim and Kasāʿī; some of the Companions and the Followers¹⁹⁸ of Madinah; Thauri and Aḥmad (in one of his two opinions) and so too Shāfiʿī and his followers – all are of the belief that it is part of the chapter. And similarly the Twelve-Imam Shiʿite scholars and (according to them) the Companions like ʿAlī, Ibn ʿAbbas, ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar and Abū

¹⁹⁵ *Mustadrak Ḥākim*, vol. 3, pg. 148

¹⁹⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 2, pg. 322

¹⁹⁷ Note by Translator

¹⁹⁸ Companions of the companions of the noble Prophet ﷺ.

Hurairah; some scholars from the followers such as Sa'īd b. Jubāir, 'Atā, Zuhri and Ibn al-Mubarik - all have opted for this opinion.”

He then adds: “Their most important proof is that the Companions and those who came after them - despite emphasizing that the Qur'an ought to be purified from everything which is not part of it, for which reason they never mentioned 'Āmīn' at the end of the (recitation) of Sūratul Fātiḥa - were unanimous in reciting 'Bismillāh' at the start of every chapter, except Sūratul Baraat.”

He then goes on to state that Mālik, the followers of Abu Ḥanīfah and some others considered Bismillāh to be a separate verse, which had been revealed to indicate the beginning of the chapters and serve as a separator between them.

He then narrates from Aḥmad (the renowned Sunni jurist) and some of the Qur'an-reciters of Kufah that they believed Bismillāh to be a part of Sūratul Ḥamd only and not of the other chapters.¹⁹⁹

From what has been mentioned above, it can be concluded that a definite majority of the Ahlus Sunnah are also of the belief that Bismillāh is a part of every chapter.

We present below a few of the traditions that have been narrated by means of the Sunni and Shi'ite chains of narrators (and confess that mentioning all the traditions that exist in this regard is beyond the scope of this work and more suited to a full-fledged jurisprudential discussion on the issue.)

i. Mu'awiyah b. 'Ammār, one of the companions of Imam as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: “I asked the Imam عليه السلام: ‘When I stand for prayers, should I recite 'Bismillāh' in the beginning of Sūratul Ḥamd?’ The Imam said: ‘Yes’. I questioned him once again: ‘When al-Ḥamd is

¹⁹⁹ *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 1, pg. 39-40

completed and I have to recite another chapter after it, do I have to recite 'Bismillāh'? Again he ﷺ said: 'Yes.'²⁰⁰

ii. Dār Qutni, a Sunni scholar, upon the authority of an authentic chain of narrators reports that a person approached Imam 'Alī ﷺ and asked: "What is the 'al-Saba' al-Mathānī?"²⁰¹ The Imam ﷺ replied: "It is Sūratul Hamd." The person said: "(But) Sūratul Ḥamd has (only) six verses." Whereupon he ﷺ said: "Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm is also one of its verses."²⁰²

iii. Baihaqi, the renowned Sunni narrator, upon the authority of an authentic chain of narrators reports from Ibn Juba'ir that Ibn 'Abbās said:

إِسْتَرَقَ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ النَّاسِ، أَعْظَمَ آيَةٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

"Satan has tried to steal the greatest verse of the Qur'an away from the people, and that is Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm) (an allusion to the fact that they do not recite it at the start of the Sūrahs."²⁰³

Apart from all the above, the conduct of the Muslims had always been to recite Bismillāh at the start of every chapter while reciting the Qur'an, and it has been established - by means of successive narrations - that the Noble Prophet ﷺ too used to recite it. How is it possible that the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the other Muslims would recite something that was not part of the Qur'an and persevere in this act of theirs?

The notion that some people have stated about Bismillāh being an independent verse and a part of the Qur'an but not a part of the chapters, is one which appears to be feeble and baseless. This is because the meaning and contents of Bismillāh indicate that it is for

²⁰⁰ *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 3, pg. 312

²⁰¹ The Seven Oft-Repeated (verses) (Tr.)

²⁰² *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pg. 136

²⁰³ *Sunan of Baihaqi*, vol. 2, pg. 50

starting or initiating a task and not that it possesses a meaning that is independent. In reality, this is intense rigidity and bias that in order to prop up their opinion they present forth every conceivable possibility and consider a verse like Bismillāh - whose meaning screams out aloud that it is a beginning for that which is to come later - to be an independent verse, totally unrelated with that which is before and after it.

The only plausible objection, which the opponents possess in this regard is that when the verses of the chapters of the Noble Qur'an are computed - with the exception of Sūratul Ḥamd - Bismillāh is usually not taken into account; rather, the verse which follows it, is regarded as the first verse.

The answer to this objection is clearly provided by Fakhr Rāzī in his commentary Tafsīr al-Kabīr when he says: "There is no harm if 'Bismillāh' is the first verse, by itself, in Sūratul Ḥamd, and a part of the first verse, in the other chapters of the Qur'an." Thus, for example, in Sūratul Kauthar,

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ﴾

in its entirety, shall be considered to be one verse.

In any event, this issue is so plain that it is reported that once, during his reign, Mu'āwiyah did not recite Bismillāh during a congregational prayer. After the prayers some of the Muhājirīn (The Emigrants) and the Anṣār (The Helpers) confronted him and said:

أَسْرَقْتَ أَمْ نَسَيْتَ؟

"Have you stolen (Bismillāh) or have you forgotten it?"^{204 and 205}

²⁰⁴ *Sunan of Baihaqī*, vol. 2, pg. 49. Ḥākīm has also mentioned this tradition in his book *Mustadrak*, vol. 1, pg. 233, and has regarded it as correct and authentic.

²⁰⁵ *Tafsīr-e-Namūnah*, vol. 1, pg. 17

46. Why is it forbidden to give the Qur'an to a disbeliever?

Giving the Qur'an to a non-Muslim is forbidden on condition that such an act becomes cause for its disrespect and violation of its esteem, but if we know that a non-Muslim truly intends to study about Islam and thus desires to analyze the Qur'an, not only would it be permissible to give him the Qur'an but it might even become obligatory; those who have prohibited giving the Qur'an to a non-Muslim did not intend the prohibition for such a case.

Consequently, great Islamic circles insist that the Qur'an should be translated into various languages of the world in order that the invitation towards Islam reaches those who seek the truth and yearn for reality.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Ibid., vol. 19, pg. 417

180 QUESTIONS

ENQUIRIES ABOUT ISLAM

VOLUME TWO: VARIOUS ISSUES

Extracted from the Writings of
Ayatullah al-'Uzma Hajj Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islāmic terminology from the ‘Arabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table mentioned below.

ء	’	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و	w
س	s	ي	y
ش	sh	ه	h
ص	ṣ		

Long Vowels

ا	ā
و	ū
ي	ī

Short Vowels

ـَ	a
ـُ	u
ـِ	i

ﷺ - Free from Imperfections and Exalted is He

ﷺ - Prayers be upon him and his family

ﷺ - Peace be upon him

ﷺ - Peace be upon her

ﷺ - Peace be upon them

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THIS BOOK BY
AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

QUESTIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a key to the treasures of human knowledge, and individuals and nations who tend to question less come to acquire a reduced share from this vast treasure. Basically, it is the right of every person to ask questions and obtain their answers, and none can be deprived of this logical and rational privilege.

The Noble Qur'ān has repeatedly emphasized this aspect - ask those, who possess knowledge, about that of which you do not possess knowledge.

﴿فَاسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The extensiveness of this Qur'ānic ruling reveals that Islām does not recognize any limits or restrictions as far as the issue of 'questioning' is concerned, and permits the Muslims and even the non-Muslims (despite appearing to be universal and general in meaning, this verse, in reality is addressed to the non-Muslims) to pose every kind of question, in connection with various doctrinal, social, ethical, political and other issues, to those who have knowledge about them.

Exceptions to this rule are misleading questions asked with the intention of spoiling people's faith, distorting constructive ideas, fermenting disturbance and confusion in the minds of the public,

mere wrangling, baseless arguments, obstinacy and prejudice. In reality, these are not questions but destructive inhumane plots in the guise of questions.

In any case, since the Noble Qur'ān is a colossal encyclopaedia of divine sciences and human affairs, on numerous occasions and in connection with various verses, there are questions that come to the fore - a great number of which, due to lack of applicability in those periods, have remained unanswered in the books of past commentators.

While writing Tafsīr-e-Namūnah (with the assistance of some accomplished scholars), we strived to propound all these questions - especially those related to present-day issues - and to answer them explicitly and in detail.

Since it appeared essential that everyone, especially the educated youths, possess the answers to these questions, Ḥujjatul Islām Agha-e-Ḥusaynī and a number of honourable scholars of the Ḥawzah 'Ilmiyyah - whose names appear in the introduction of the book - exerted themselves greatly in extracting these questions and answers from the 27 volumes of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and 10 volumes of Payām-e-Qur'ān. Consequently, they accumulated one hundred and eighty important questions and expended great effort in imparting a systematic arrangement to them (may Allāh accept their efforts).

It is hoped that this collection exposes a new opening for everyone - especially the beloved Muslim youths - regarding issues pertaining to Islām and the Qur'ān, and serves as provision for all of us for the Day of Judgment.

Ḥawzah 'Ilmiyyah, Qum
Nasir Makarim Shirazi

BIOGRAPHY OF AYATULLAH AL-UZMA MAKARIM SHIRAZI

THE EMINENT SCHOLAR, Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī was born in the year 1924 in the city of Shīrāz in Iran into a religious family who were well known for their high level of spirituality and noble ethical traits. His Eminence finished his elementary school studies in Shīrāz, where his intelligence, excellent memory and eagerness to learn, made him amongst the best students, often completing two years of studies in one year!

The conditions which existed in Iran in those days obligated this young man - who possessed such talent and aptitude - to choose the path of University and use his gifts to attain a secular qualification. However, the hand of destiny and the blessings of the Merciful Lord and his own secret desire to become better acquainted with, and to delve deeper into the teachings of Islam, drew this young man’s attention towards Islamic studies. Especially because, since after the spring of 1941 (when Iran became embroiled in the 2nd World War), the regime’s restrictions relaxed and the Islamic Seminaries gained renewed popularity.

HIS STUDIES

His Eminence started his formal Islamic studies at the age of 14 at Madreseh-ye Āghā Babākhān-e Shīrāz, and within a short period of time, he was able to complete the prerequisite preliminary studies such as morphology (ṣarf), Arabic grammar (naḥw), logic (mantīq), exposition (bayān), and rhetoric (badī’).

He then turned his attention towards the fields of jurisprudence (fiqh) and principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and once again, due to his exceptional abilities, he was able to finish the study of the complete levels of introductory and both the levels of the intermediate Islamic studies in just four years! During this time, a

group of students from the Islamic Seminary in Shīrāz were also benefiting from his classes.

The positive criticisms and personal opinions of His Eminence concerning the classes being held in Qum and also in relation to the need for including extra information within the books that were being taught at the various Theological Seminaries hinted at the bright future which awaited him. Meanwhile in religious gatherings in this city, his capabilities, genius, meticulousness and deep thought were witnessed by others and no one was able to deny his God-given talents.

When this brilliant star was a mere 18 years old, through his penetrating thought and versatile pen, he wrote a commentary on the book *Kifāyatu'l Uṣūl*, in which he shed light on some ambiguous issues mentioned in this traditional work. At the age of 18, he formally entered the Theological Seminary of Qum and for the next five years, he attended the religious gatherings and classes of some of the greatest teachers of those days, such as *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Burūjerdī* رحمته الله and other great personalities.

In order for His Eminence to become better acquainted with the illustrious scholars who were studying and teaching in one of the greatest Theological Seminaries of the Shī'a, and to better understand their ideas and thoughts, in the year 1950, he made his way to the *Ḥawzatul 'Ilmiyyah* of Najaf al-Ashraf in Iraq. It was here that he was able to take part in the classes of some of the greatest teachers such as: *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Ḥakīm* رحمته الله, *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Khūī* رحمته الله and *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā 'Abdul Hādī Shīrāzī* رحمته الله and others.

At the age of 24, His Eminence was granted permission for independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) from two of the great scholars of Najaf al-Ashraf. In addition, *Āyatullāh al-'Uẓmā Ḥakīm* رحمته الله wrote a brief foreword to His Eminence's work, *The Book of Ṭahārah*.

His acquisition of knowledge continued with the great teachers in Najaf until economical restraints forced him to leave this holy city,

and return back to Iran in the year 1951. He chose to settle in the holy city of Qum, which in those days required religious scholars. Once again, he joined the circle of scholars who later on, had a profound impact on his life.

After returning to Iran, Āyatullāh al-‘Uẓmā Makārim Shīrāzī began teaching the intermediate and higher level of studies (khārij) in uṣūl al-fiqh and fiqh – and it is now close to 28 years that he has been teaching these classes, which have benefited a large number of students. In addition, after teaching many of the important books of fiqh, he went on to write summaries and notes of these great works. At present, his sessions at the khārij level on uṣūl are one of the most popular classes in the Ḥawzatul ‘Ilmiyyah of the Shī‘a and there are close to 2,000 dedicated scholars and students who attend and benefit from his lectures.

From the time of his youth, he used to write books in various fields of Islamic studies such as theology, Islamic awareness and the issue of wilāyah (of the Ahlu’l Bait ﷺ). Later, he started to write on the exegesis of the Qur’ān, fiqh and uṣūl al-fiqh and he is currently recognized as one of the important writers in the Muslim world.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

He played an active role in the events which culminated in the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and it is because of this that the Shah imprisoned him several times. He was exiled on three separate occasions to the cities of Chabhār, Mahābād and Anārak. After the Revolution, he was appointed to the first Council of Representatives (Majlis-e Khubragān) where he played an important role in formulating the first constitution.

HIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Āyatullāh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī has been very active in various fields of teaching and guiding the upcoming scholars of the

Theological Seminary of Qum, and vhas initiated various projects, of which we will mention just a few:

1. A Religious Publication of the Shī'a Centre : For a long time, His Eminence felt the need for the Ḥawzatul 'Ilmiyyah of Qum to have a general publication which would be able to defend the Shī'a against the ever-growing works that were being published to misguide people.

In addition, people had always expected this from the great Islamic seminaries and there was pressure from different parts of the community, including the supreme religious authorities (marāja-ye taqlīd) of the Ḥawza and others, to publish a magazine that would be able to answer the religious enquiries of the youth and also to counter the books and magazines that were misleading the people.

Due to the fact that at that time, there were some intellectuals who were not ready to accept such a publication, His Eminence sought out serious and resourceful thinkers to shoulder the heavy responsibility of producing such a publication. In this regard, His Eminence, along with a group of other scholars and the assistance of the leaders of the Ḥawzatu'l 'Ilmiyyah of Qum and the financial support of well-wishers, launched the magazine, "Maktab-e-Islam". This magazine was unprecedented in the Shī'a world, and perhaps from the point of view of the range of its circulation, it is amongst the leading religious magazines being published in the entire Muslim world. This magazine gave a fresh and new path of direction to the great students and thinkers of the Ḥawzah.

At present, this publication is in its 39th year - offering its valuable services to the Muslim world and the Shī'a communities. It has found a special spot within the hearts of the youth, the university students, teachers and other learned personalities and it is has spread the light of Islam and Tashayyu' from its centre (Qum) to the entire world.

2. Organizing Gatherings to Offer Lessons in Theology and other Religious Teachings: His Eminence felt that the classical works that had been written in the field of Islamic Theology were no longer sufficient, with the passing of time, to address modern needs. The traditional books of theology had been written in a century when the kind of problems we encounter today did not exist. The older books discussed theological issues such as the disputes between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites and other similar topics, which are no longer applicable today and which have become just of passing interest only.

Due to these facts, His Eminence, once again calling upon his literary talents and abilities, was able to present the subjects of theological and principal beliefs in a novel and unprecedented manner. By organizing theological discussions, he made hundreds of people become conversant with these subjects, and he compiled the summaries of these sessions in the form of books.

3. Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth: In addition to sessions on theology, His Eminence organised other classes through which his students were also instructed about the teachings of eight current world religions so that they could engage in debates or correspond with the proponents of these faiths and counter their beliefs and ideologies.

Within a short period of time, these classes were able to produce able students who were well informed in their specialized field of study and today, an elite group of youth within the Ḥawzatul 'Ilmiyyah, are busy studying these topics. Furthermore, in order to safeguard the youth from the clutches of corruption, His Eminence formed an organization called the Religious Council for the Protection of the Youth. One of the outcomes of this council was the publication of material that was interesting to the youth, and these quickly became established amongst the youth in the country.

4. Struggles Against Eclectic Tendencies: On one of his trips to the city of Shīrāz, His Eminence noticed that sūfism had gathered

popular support. A group of people requested him to write a book which would outline the principles of the sūfīs – one that would explain their beliefs in an agreeable and respectful manner. His Eminence, by making use of the resources available to him, wrote this book in his usual style, and the book was printed in the year 1953 CE with the title, *Jalwā-ye Ḥaq* (The Manifestation of Truth).

The style in which he wrote this book caught the attention of the late Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Burūjerdī رحمته الله and he requested His Eminence to see him and congratulated him for his valuable efforts. In relation to this book, Āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Burūjerdī رحمته الله made the following commendation, “I have gone through this book in my spare time and did not find even the smallest of weak points in it. May Allāh reward you for your troubles.”

5. Establishing Organizations and Centres of Learning: His Eminence had made the intention of establishing such organizations in the same number as the Ma’ṣūmīn عليه السلام, which is 14. By the grace of God, he has thus far been successful in establishing four such important schools within the Theological Seminary of Qum and two religious organizations for the welfare of the students who are living in the city of Mashad.

6. Writings – The number of publications of His Eminence currently lies at approximately 130 books which have all been printed – some of which have been reprinted more than 30 times and others which have been translated into more than 10 languages and have been published in various parts of the world.

The commentary of the Qur’ān authored by him, *Tafsīr-e-Namuneh* (The Model Commentary) has been translated into many languages, including Arabic (*al-Amthāl Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*), and can be found in many homes. An English commentary of the Qur’ān entitled, “Light of the Holy Qur’ān” is also currently being published which is largely based on this work. In addition to this commentary, he has also authored a thematic commentary of the Qur’ān entitled, *Payām-e-Qur’ān* (The Message of the Qur’ān) in ten volumes. These

two commentaries have opened up a new chapter in the field of exegesis of the Noble Qur'ān.

One complete course in usūl al-dīn has been covered in the first series of Payām-e-Qur'ān, while the author has recently embarked on a second series covering ethics (akhlāq) in the Qur'ān. The first volume of this commentary has recently been translated into English and will be printed soon by the World Federation of KSIMC, based in the United Kingdom.

In addition, the books he has written on theological beliefs have ably provided a defence for students and scholars against the onslaught of books containing false beliefs and untruths.

Of the books of fiqh that he has written, we can mention the following: Anwār al-Fuqahah, al-Qawā'idu'l Fiqhiyyah, Anwār al-Uṣūl and the notes and commentaries on the complete text of 'Urwat al-Wuthqā which have been printed many times over.

His practical guide for Muslims (Tawḍīh al-Masā'il) has also been printed many times and has also been translated into Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Azari and English.

A complete list of other publications of this great scholar which have been translated into English and are available is as follows. Most of these can be read on his website at www.makaremshirazi.org.

1. Ethical Discourses [40 Lectures on Ethics and Morality] – Volume 1, 2 & 3 translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
2. Khums: The Islāmic Tax translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islāmic Humanitarian Service [www.al-haqq.com]
3. Lessons in Islāmic Beliefs – Tawḥīd, 'Adalāh, Nubuwwāh, Imāmah, and Ma'ād translated by Laleh Bakhtiyar – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]

4. Life Under the Grace of Ethics translated by Monir Shafiei - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
5. Message of the Qur'ān – A Thematic Exegesis of the Noble Qur'ān Volume 1 of 10 translated by Saleem Bhimji - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
6. One Hundred and Eighty Questions – Volumes 1, 2 & 3 translated by Shahnawaz Mahdavi - published by the World Federation of KSIMC [www.world-federation.org]
7. One Hundred and Fifty Lessons for Life translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī – published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]
8. Our Beliefs translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
9. Philosophy of Islāmic Rulings written in co-operation with Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī Translated by Sayyid Athar Rizvi - published by Ansariyan Publications [www.ansariyan.org]
10. Summary of the Islāmic Rulings translated by 'Alī Abdul Rasheed - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
11. Tafsīr of the Noble Qur'an – Sūratul Jinn translated by Saleem Bhimji – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service and the World Federation of KSIMC [www.al-haqq.com] & [www.world-federation.org]
12. The Ḥadīth of Ghadir – The Expressive Evidence for Imāmate translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

13. The Noble Qurʻān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 1 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
14. The Noble Qurʻān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 2 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
15. The Noble Qurʻān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 3 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
16. The Noble Qurʻān – Translation and Commentary – Volume 4 translated by Mansoor Amini - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]
17. The Islāmic Laws translated by the office of Āyatullāh al-ʻUzmā Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī - published by the Office of Āyatullāh Makarim Shirazi [www.makaremshirazi.org]

INTRODUCTION

ALL THROUGH THE AGES, distinguished Shi'ite scholars have authored numerous commentaries, some of which have been a source of benefit for the scholars, the Ḥawza 'Ilmiyyah and those who have been attracted to the Qur'ān. However, a commentary possessing the excellences of Tafsīr-e-Namūnah - and that too in the Persian language - was found to be lacking, especially in this period of time wherein there is an ever-increasing focus towards comprehending the Noble Qur'ān.

Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā Makārim Shīrāzī, with the co-operation of some distinguished scholars, has fulfilled this requirement and done an invaluable service to the Noble Qur'ān by authoring this valuable commentary

Some of the features of this commentary, which have contributed to its extra-ordinary universality and attraction, are as follows:

1. Although this commentary is in Persian, its scientific and research aspects have been given such consideration and emphasis that it benefits not only the common masses, who are interested in comprehending the Qur'ān, but also scholars and men of learning.
2. While interpreting the verses, rather than dwelling on unnecessary issues, particular attention has been paid to those important issues that could have a great influence and impact upon the lives of individuals and the social life of the society.
3. In connection with the topics that are propounded in the verses, separate and succinct discussions have been presented in this commentary in such a manner that a brief study of these would make the reader independent of the need to refer to other books on these topics.
4. The use of intricate terminology has been avoided; nevertheless, whenever necessary, explanations have been provided in the

footnotes so that in addition to scholars and people of learning, this commentary is also useful for the general public.

5. One of the important distinctions of this commentary is that it presents solutions for present-day issues, and answers for various kinds of questions and objections pertaining to the Uṣul and Furū‘ of religion, and Islāmic sciences and culture.

In view of these salient features, we sought permission from the reverend teacher for collecting the questions and answers separately, and presenting them before the general public, especially the dear youths. Fortunately, he responded positively to our request and so, with the co-operation of friends, Ḥujjaj al-Islām Aḥmad Ja‘farī, Sayyid ‘Alī Riḍā Ja‘farī, Sayyid Murtaḍā Mūsawī, Sayyid Asghar Ḥusaynī and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Muḥammadī, the entire Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and the subjective commentary Payām-e-Qur’ān were subjected to a detailed and meticulous study. All the instances extracted and the book - presently before you and containing 180 questions and answers - was then organized and made ready.

At this juncture it is necessary to mention a few points:

1. At times, answers to certain questions have been presented in various places in the commentaries (Tafsīr-e-Namūnah and Payām-e-Qur’ān) and so all the instances were collected and correlated in a special manner and arrangement, and mentioned in one place in this book.

2. In this collection care has been exercised to refrain from presenting questions pertaining to the commentary of the verses. This is because our objective was to compile those questions that are propounded in our religious society and not questions relating to the commentary of the verses - for the answers to the latter can be obtained only after a study of the entire commentary.

3. It may be questioned: ‘Is this collection not a repetition of the book ‘Pursish-ha Wa Pasukh-hae Madhhabi’, authored by the

reverend teacher and Āyatullāh Subḥānī?’ In this regard it should be known that there are only 30 questions that are common to both of them.

4. Although the compilation of this book may appear to have been a simple task, however the various stages of the work, whether it be the studying of the commentaries, the extraction of the questions and answers, the arrangement and organisation of the repeated portions... demanded a great deal of time.

5. From the entire collection of 180 questions and answers, 143 questions are from Tafsīr-e-Namūnah, 35 from the commentary Payām-e-Qur’ān, one from Payām-e-Imām (the commentary on Nahjul Balāghah by the reverend teacher) and one from the book Aafaridegar-e-Jahān (a collection of the reverend teacher’s lectures). It is hoped that this insignificant service finds acceptance by Haḍrat Baqīyatullāh - May our souls be his ransom.

Sayyid Ḥusāin Ḥusāinī

Qum

180 QUESTIONS – PART II

VARIOUS ISSUES

1. What is the purpose of mankind's creation?

It is rare to find someone who has not asked himself or others the question: “What is the purpose of our creation?” A group of people continuously come into this world while another group leave it, becoming extinguished for ever - what is the idea behind this coming and going?

If we humans had not been living on this planet, what difference would it have made? Is it necessary for us to know why we have come and why we shall go? If we discover the reason, do we have the ability to acquire this objective? Subsequent to this question, numerous other questions loom, plaguing man's mind and thoughts.

Whenever the materialists ask themselves this question, they apparently cannot answer it since matter does not possess perception and intellect for it to pursue an objective. Hence, they have put themselves at ease in this regard by convincing themselves of the insignificance of man's creation!

Is it not strange that these people envision precise aims and plan systematic programs for the minute details of life such as education, job, work, treatment, medication and sports, but, when they view life as a whole, they consider it to be aimless?

Thus, it is not astonishing that when a group from amongst such people reflect upon these issues, they become discontented by this vain and purposeless life and consequently resort to suicide.

However, when a God-worshipping person asks himself this question, he never finds himself in despair. Primarily, he knows that the Creator of this world is Wise and therefore His act of creation is

undoubtedly based on wisdom - although some men might not be aware of it; secondly, viewing every part of himself, he observes that each one possesses an objective. Not only the brain, heart, blood vessels and the nerves, but even the nails, eyelashes, fingerprints, the depressions in the palms and the feet; each has a philosophy attached to its presence which has been identified and proven today.

How naïvely we reflect when we consider all of these to individually possess a purpose but to collectively lack an objective!

What kind of absurd judgment it is that identifies an objective for the construction of each building within a city, yet denies the existence of any purpose for the city itself!

Is it conceivable that an engineer constructs a great building in which all the rooms, passages, doors, hatches, ponds, gardens and the décors have been meticulously built with a particular purpose in mind, whilst the building itself has been constructed without any objective?

These are the points which provide conviction to a believing person that this creation pursues a great objective, which he should strive to comprehend by means of his intellect.

Furthermore, it is amazing that when the advocates of the purposelessness of creation venture into the fields of physical sciences, they relentlessly endeavor to uncover the aim of various phenomena which they happen come across; so much so that they are unwilling to consider the insignificance of even one small gland situated in a corner of the body - experimenting for years to uncover the reason behind its existence. However, when it comes to the creation of man, they unequivocally claim it to be without an objective! What a bizarre contradiction!

In any event, belief in the Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ and attention towards the purpose of the various parts of man, imparts a firm conviction

to us that there exists a great significance behind the creation of man.

Having comprehended this, we ought to strive to understand this purpose and, to the best of our abilities, set off towards achieving it.

Attention towards one fundamental point might serve to illuminate our path and thereby make our journey easier:

All of our actions are always motivated by an objective; and this goal usually involves combating our flaws and fulfilling our requirements. Even acts such as serving someone, helping a person in distress or practicing self-sacrifice; each serve to do away with shortcomings and fulfill our spiritual needs.

Accordingly, in contemplating the attributes and acts of Allāh ﷻ we usually blunder by comparing them with ours, often asking: What flaws and shortcomings did Allāh ﷻ possess that could possibly be eliminated by creating us? Or, when we read in the Qur'ān, which states that the purpose of man's creation is worshipping Allāh ﷻ, we ask: Why does He need our worship? We do not realize that these thoughts stem from an erroneous comparison of the attributes of the Creator with the created.

Man indeed is a limited and confined entity which strives to do away shortcomings and hence concentrates its efforts towards achieving this objective. However, this concept is meaningless with respect to an Entity that is unlimited and infinite, and hence we ought to seek the objective and purpose of His acts in entities other than Him.

He is an abundant overflowing spring and the bounty-creating Originator who, having taken the entire creation within the canopy of His support, nourishes and fosters them, leading them from imperfection towards perfection. This is the actual purpose of our servitude (towards Allāh ﷻ) and this is the philosophy of our worship and prayers, which are indeed training classes for leading us towards perfection.

Consequently we conclude that the purpose of our creation is the (achievement) of perfection of our selves.

Basically, the actual act of creation – that is to move from non-existence into existence, from a non-entity into an entity, from zero to a figure - is a huge step towards perfection, subsequent to which start the other phases that lead towards this goal, including the entire religious set-up which emphasizes this objective.¹

2. Why did Allāh ﷻ not create mankind perfect from the onset?

This objection stems from an oversight of the fact that the main branch of perfection is voluntary perfection. In other words, perfection (and development) means that man traverses the path using his own feet and by means of his resolve. If he were to be held by the hand and taken by force, neither would it be a matter of glory nor would real perfection be achieved.

For example, if a person out of his own will decided to give one riyal from his wealth in charity, he would have progressed towards moral perfection in that same ratio, whereas if millions were to be taken forcefully from him and given in charity, he would not have advanced even one step towards this goal. It is for this reason that in various verses of the Qur’ān this reality has been asserted that had Allāh ﷻ desired, all the people would have become believers, under compulsion. However such faith would not have proved beneficial to them.²

﴿ وَ لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ﴾

“And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the Earth would have believed - all of them.”³

¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 389

² *Ibid.*, vol. 13, pg. 375

³ *Sūrat Yūnus* (10), Verse 99

3. What is the purpose of the perfection of man?

Some ask that although the aim of our creation is human perfection, what is the purpose of this goal?

The answer to this question shall become clear by considering the fact that perfection is the final aim or in other words, it is:

غَايَةُ الْعَايَاتِ.

Explanation

If we were to ask a student: Why do you study? He would say: So that I can gain admission into a university.

If we ask: Why do you desire to get yourself admitted into a university? He would answer: So that I can become an able doctor or an engineer (for example).

If we ask again: Why do you desire to possess a medical or an engineering degree? He shall say: So that I may engage myself in a productive activity and also that I earn a good income.

If we were to persist and ask: Why do you need a good income? He would say: So that I can lead a respectable and comfortable life.

Finally if we ask him: Why do you desire to lead a respectable and comfortable life? At this juncture we shall notice that his tone changes and he will say: Well, so that I can lead a respectable and comfortable life.

He repeats his previous answer.

This proves that he has reached his final answer and, technically speaking, he has reached the غَايَةُ الْعَايَاتِ - the final aim of his efforts beyond which there exists no answer and which constitutes his final aim and objective. This is with regard to the material life.

The case is similar in respect to the spiritual life too. When it is said: What was the purpose of the prophets, the revelation of the Divine Books, the religious obligations, and the educative set-up? We say: For achieving human perfection and attaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ.

Now, if it is said: What is the purpose of achieving human perfection and attaining proximity to Allāh ﷻ? We say: For proximity to Allāh ﷻ! This is the final aim. Expressing it differently, we desire everything for the sake of perfection and attaining nearness to Allāh ﷻ, but we seek nearness to Allāh ﷻ for itself (i.e. nearness to Allāh ﷻ).⁴

4. Why does Allāh ﷻ test people?

The topic of Divine trial is an issue of great debate and discussion. The first question that comes to mind is: Are trials not for understanding matters which are obscure, hence eliminating our ignorance? If so, why does Allāh ﷻ, Who possesses knowledge of the hidden and the manifest of everything within the heavens and the earth, have to examine and test (the people)? Does there exist something, which is concealed from Him and which may become manifest for Him by means of examination?

The answer lies in the fact that the concept of examination with respect to Allāh ﷻ is vastly different from that, with respect to us.

Our examinations are that which has been stated above, i.e. for a better comprehension and for clearing away ambiguity and ignorance, whilst the Divine trials are, in reality, development and training.

Explanation

In the Noble Qur'ān there are more than twenty instances of examinations that have been attributed to Allāh ﷻ. This is a general law (of conduct) of Allāh ﷻ, implemented by Him for the development of man's hidden abilities (and bringing them from potentiality into actuality), thereby enabling him to progress. Just as iron, for acquiring greater strength, is put into a furnace to make it tempered, similarly man is also nurtured within the furnace of adversities in order that he becomes steadfast.

⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 393

In reality, the examination of Allāh ﷻ resembles the work of an experienced gardener, who sows the seeds in a fertile soil. These seeds, benefiting from the natural bounties, begin to grow gradually - combating adversities, battling unfavourable conditions and enduring violent storms - until they end up in the form of a spray or a copious gargantuan tree, capable of continuing their existence in the face of hardships.

For the purpose of making soldiers tough, militarily, they are made to participate in numerous different exercises and war games, wherein they are subjected to various hardships such as hunger, thirst, heat, chillness, adverse conditions and severe obstacles, in order that they develop into accomplished, conditioned and proficient soldiers.

And this is the secret of Divine examinations.

The Noble Qur'ān has asserted this reality, when it says:

﴿ وَ لَيَسْتَلِي اللّٰهُ مَا فِي صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَ لِيْمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴾

“And that Allāh might test what was in your chests and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allāh knows what is in the hearts.”⁵

The Commander of the Faithful ﷺ, in a statement very profound in meaning regarding the philosophy of Divine trials, says:

وَ اِنْ كَانَ سُبْحَانَهُ اَعْلَمَ بِهِمْ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ لَكِنْ لَتَظْهَرَ الْاَفْعَالُ الَّتِي بِهَا يُسْتَحَقُّ الثَّوَابُ وَ الْعِقَابُ.

“Although Allāh is more aware of their souls than they themselves are, He tries them so that their deeds, which necessitate reward and punishment, become manifest.”⁶

⁵ *Sūrat Āle 'Imrān* (3), Verse 154

Accordingly, the internal attributes of man can only be a measure for reward or chastisement when they manifest themselves in man's actions. Allāh ﷻ tries man to enable that which he possesses in the interior to become manifest in deed and, his talents and abilities emerge from potentiality into actuality.

In the absence of Divine examination, these talents and abilities would have never flourished, and consequently the fruits of deeds would have never manifested themselves upon the branches of the tree of human existence; and this is the philosophy of Divine trials from the Islamic perspective.⁷

5. Is the 'prosperity' or 'wretchedness' of mankind, inherent?

In verse 105 of Sūrat Hūd, we read:

﴿يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ﴾

“On the day when it shall come, no soul shall speak except with His permission, then (some) of them shall be unhappy and (others) happy.”

The question which arises is: Does this verse indicate that man's prosperity and wretchedness is inherent?

There are several points that need to be taken into consideration:

1. It as we had mentioned earlier, there are some who, on the basis of such verses, have sought to prove that man's prosperity and wretchedness is inherent. However, not only do they fail to prove this point, but they clearly prove that wretchedness and prosperity are states which are acquired. This is because the verse says:

﴿أَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقَوْا...﴾

“As for those who will be wretched...”

And:

⁶ *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Saying 93

⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 526

﴿أَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا...﴾

“As for those who are fortunate...”

indeed, if prosperity and wretchedness were inherent, the verse should have said:

﴿أَمَّا الْأَشْقِيَاءُ وَ أَمَّا السَّعْدَاءُ...﴾

‘As for the wretched ones’ and ‘as for the fortunate ones’,

or something similar to this. Accordingly, it becomes evident that what Fakhr Rāzī has said in his commentary, when he says - In these verses, Allāh ﷻ has already ruled that on the Day of Judgment a group shall be fortunate and blessed whilst another group shall be wretched; and it is impossible for those, regarding whom Allāh ﷻ has passed this ruling and about whom, He knows whether they shall be fortunate or wretched, to bring a change within themselves. This is because, should such a thing ever take place, it would mean that the words of Allāh ﷻ were lies and His knowledge was (in fact) ignorance - and this is impossible!! - is totally baseless.

This is the popular ‘knowledge of Allāh’ objection, which is propounded in connection with the issue of *jabr* (compulsion) and *ikhtiyār* (choice). The answer to this claim is as follows:

If we desist from imposing our pre-conceived opinions upon the verse, then its meaning is clear, for it says: On that Day, a group shall be fortunate as a result of their deeds, while a group shall become wretched due to their deeds, and Allāh ﷻ is aware of those, who shall traverse the path to prosperity out of their own free will, and those, who shall advance towards wretchedness, out of their own will and choice. Thus, contrary to what Fakhr Rāzī has said, if the people were compelled to select a path, His knowledge would in reality be His ignorance since He had known that all the people would opt for the blessed and wretched path of out of their own will and choice.

A proof to what has been stated above is the fact that the above verses are mentioned pursuant to the narratives of the previous nations, a large number of whom, as a result of deviation from the path of truth and opposition to the divine leaders, were seized by a painful chastisement in this world. And the Qur'ān, with the objective of guiding us by distinguishing the paths leading towards prosperity and wretchedness, has recounted these narratives for us.

Essentially, as Fakhr Rāzī and other like-minded individuals imagine, if we were to possess inherent fortunateness and wretchedness, and if it were to be drawn towards good and evil deeds without any choice, all the teaching and training would be vain and futile. The coming of the prophets, the revelation of the Divine books, the advices, admonitions, encouragements, censures, rebukes, criticisms, remonstrations, Reckoning and finally, rewards and punishments - all of them - would be looked upon as either useless, or tyrannical!

Even those, who regard man as being compelled with respect to performing good or evil acts – irrespective of whether they consider this compulsion to be Divine compulsion, natural compulsion, economic compulsion or circumstantial compulsion, only advocate this theory when speaking or studying; however, when it comes to real life actions, even they do not profess this opinion. And it is for this reason that when their rights are trampled they regard the transgressor as deserving rebuke and punishment, never willing to condone him on the basis that he had been ‘compelled’ into performing this act (on the part of Allāh ﷻ) or regard punishing him as being unjust, or say: he could not refrain himself from committing the act, for Allāh ﷻ or nature or the environment forced him into it. This is another proof of the inherent nature of ikhtiyār (choice).

Furthermore, we do not observe any of those who follow the belief of jabr (compulsion), adhering to this belief in the course of their daily activities; rather, in their interaction with the people, they

always look upon them as individuals, who possess freedom and choice.

All the world's inhabitants, by setting up judicial systems for meting out punishments to the offenders, have practically acknowledged man's freedom of will.

All the educative institutions of the world too have implicitly accepted the opinion that man performs actions by means of his own will and inclination, and it is possible, by means of education, to distance him from errors, lapses and deviated thinking.

2. Interestingly, in the above verses, the word (شَقُوا) is in the active voice whereas the word (سُعِدُوا) is in the passive. This difference in expression could be a subtle allusion to the point that man advances upon the path of wretchedness by his own self, yet in order to advance upon the path of prosperity, he requires Divine assistance, in the absence of which he shall never be successful. Undoubtedly, only those who have stepped out in this direction out of their own choice and will, and have developed within themselves the worthiness to benefit from such support, shall come to receive it.⁸

6. What is the difference between Islam and Īmān?

In verse 14 of Sūratul Ḥujurāt, we read:

﴿قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَ لَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَ لَمَّا يَدْخُلِ
الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ﴾

“The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts.”

The question that arises here is: What is the difference between ‘Islam’ and ‘Īmān’?

According to this verse, the difference between them lies in that Islam possesses the external form such that whoever recites the

⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 9, pg. 236

shahādatayn⁹ enters into the category of Muslims, after which all the Islamic rulings shall become applicable with respect to him.

But Īmān is an issue, which is internal (to man), and is associated neither with his tongue nor his exterior, but rather his heart.

There could be various motives for Islam - even material and personal benefits, yet Īmān always stems from knowledge, awareness and spiritual motives and it is due to this Īmān that taqwa (piety) manifests itself. This is witnessed in an eloquent statement of the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

الإِسْلَامُ عَلَانِيَةٌ وَ الْإِيْمَانُ فِي الْقَلْبِ.

“Islam is (a) proclaimed (issue), whereas Īmān is housed in the heart.”¹⁰

In another tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq ؑ has said:

الإِسْلَامُ يُحَقَّنُ بِهِ الدَّمُ وَ تُؤَدَّى بِهِ الْأَمَانَةُ وَ تُسْتَحَلُّ بِهِ الْفُرُوجُ وَ الثَّوَابُ عَلَى الْإِيْمَانِ.

“By means of Islam, the blood (of man) is safeguarded, trusts are returned, matrimony becomes lawful; but rewards are on account of Īmān.”¹¹

And it is for this very reason that in some traditions the concept of Islam has been confined to the vocal testimony, whereas Īmān has been emphasized as being testimony in conjunction with deeds.

الْإِيْمَانُ إِقْرَارٌ وَ عَمَلٌ وَ الْإِسْلَامُ إِقْرَارٌ بِلا عَمَلٍ.

“True faith is to testify and to act while submission (al-Islām) is to testify prior to acting.”¹²

⁹ ‘The two testimonies’ - testifying to the Unity of Allāh and the Prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. (Tr.)

¹⁰ *Majma’ul Bayān*, vol. 9, pg. 138

¹¹ *al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, Chapter Inna al-Islam Yuhqanu bihi al-Damm, no. 1 and 2

This meaning is also seen under the discussion ‘Islām and ‘Īmān’; Fuḍail ibne Yasār states: I heard Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام say:

إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ يُشَارِكُ الْإِسْلَامَ وَلَا يُشَارِكُهُ الْإِسْلَامُ إِنَّ الْإِيمَانَ مَا وَقَرَ فِي الْقُلُوبِ وَالْإِسْلَامَ مَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَنَاحِحُ وَالْمَوَارِيثُ وَحَقْنِ الدِّمَاءِ.

“Verily, Īmān teams up with Islām but Islām does not team up with Īmān. Indeed, Īmān is that which settles into the heart whereas Islām is that, which governs the rules of marriage and inheritance, and safeguards the (shedding of) blood (of man).”¹³

Nonetheless, this difference in meaning is applicable only when both these terms are used alongside each other, however if they are used separately, it is possible that Islām may refer to the same thing, which is referred to by Īmān; i.e. each of these two terms may be used synonymously.¹⁴

7. What is meant by ‘Shayṭān’ in the Noble Qur’ān?

The word Shayṭān is derived from the roots (شطن) and شاطن means ‘impure and base’.

Shayṭān refers to an entity that is rebellious – irrespective of whether it is of the humans, jinn or animals. It is also said to mean ‘a nefarious soul, who is distanced from Allāh and Truth’; all of these meanings, in reality, can be observed to be turning back to one common element.

It should be noted that Shayṭān is a ‘common noun’ whereas Iblīs is a ‘proper noun’. In other words, every harmful, deviating and rebellious entity – human or otherwise – is referred to as Shayṭān. Iblīs is the name of that Shayṭān, who deceived Ādam and even presently, together with his soldiers and forces, lies in ambush of the humans.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., no. 3

¹⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 210

From the usage of this word in the Qur'ān, it can also be inferred that Shayṭān is used to denote a harmful being - one who has deviated from the right path and has embarked upon a mission of distressing others; an entity that attempts to create division, discord and corruption, just as we recite:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَابْتِغَاءَ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ يَكْرِهُنَّ﴾

“Surely Shayṭān only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst.”¹⁵

The word يُرِيدُ is in the imperfect tense which denotes ‘continuity’, indicating that this ‘desire’ is a continuous and perpetual desire of the Shayṭān.

Furthermore, we observe that in the Qur'ān, the use of the term Shayṭān has not been restricted for a specific being; rather it has been used to refer to wicked and corrupt humans too. The Qur'ān says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ﴾

“And thus did We make for every prophet an enemy, the Shayṭāns from among men and jinn.”¹⁶

That Iblis has also been referred to as Shayṭān is because of the evilness and corruption that exists within him.

In addition to this, the word Shayṭān has been employed to refer to microbes too:

For example, the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام has said:

لَا تَشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ مِنْ ثُلْمَةِ الْإِنَاءِ وَلَا مِنْ عُرْوَتِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَقْعُدُ عَلَى الْعُرْوَةِ وَالثُّلْمَةِ.

¹⁵ *Sūratul Mā'idah* (5), Verse 91

¹⁶ *Sūratul An'ām* (6), Verse 112

“Do not drink water from the broken portion of the vessel nor from the portion of the handle, for surely, the Shayṭān sits upon the handle and the broken portion.”¹⁷

Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has also said:

وَلَا يُشْرَبُ مِنْ أُذُنِ الْكُوزِ وَلَا مِنْ كَسْرِهِ إِنْ كَانَ فِيهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَشْرَبُ الشَّيَاطِينِ .

“(Water) should not be drunk from the handle (side) of a jug and nor from the broken portion of it, if present, for these are the drinking-place of the ‘Shayṭāns’.”¹⁸

The Noble Prophet ﷺ has said: “Do not lengthen (the hair of) your moustaches, for the Shayṭān makes it a haven for himself and conceals himself there!”¹⁹

Thus, it becomes clear that one of the meanings of Shayṭān is ‘harmful microbes’. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it possesses this meaning on all occasions and in all instances. Rather, it means that Shayṭān has several meanings, one of the most obvious of them being ‘Iblis and his assistants’; another being ‘corrupt humans’; while at times it is also employed to refer to ‘harmful bacteria’.²⁰

8. What is the reality of the Jinn?

It can be deduced from the literal meaning of this word that the Jinn is an entity that is invisible; numerous characteristics of this being are mentioned in the Qur’ān, such as:

1. It is an entity that has been created from the flames of fire, unlike man, who has been created from earth.²¹

¹⁷ *al-Kāfi*, vol. 6, Kitāb al-Atīmah wa al-Ashribah, Chapter Bāb al-Awāni.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 191

²¹ *Sūratul Raḥmān* (55), Verse 15

﴿ وَ خَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ ﴾

2. Possesses knowledge, perception, the faculty of logic, the power of reasoning, and can distinguish between truth and falsehood (various verses of *Sūratul Jinn*).

3. Possesses (religious) obligations and responsibilities (verses of *Sūratul Jinn* and *al-Wāqī'ah*).

4. Some of them are believers while others are disbelievers:

﴿ وَأَنَا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ وَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ... ﴾

“There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary...”²²

5. They shall be resurrected:

﴿ وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴾

“And as to the deviators, they are fuel of hell.”²³

6. They initially possessed the power to penetrate into the skies, eavesdrop and procure news but were later prohibited:

﴿ وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا ﴾

“And that we used to sit in some of the sitting-places thereof to steal a hearing, but, he who would (try to) listen now would find a flame lying in wait for him.”²⁴

7. They used to establish contact with some of the people and, by means of the limited knowledge of the Unseen that they possessed, endeavoured to misguide the people:

²² *Sūratul Jinn* (72), Verse 11

²³ *Ibid.*, Verse 15

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Verse 9

﴿ وَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴾

“And that persons from among men used to seek refuge with persons from among jinn, so they increased them in wrongdoing.”²⁵

8. From amongst them there are those who, like some humans, possess great powers:

﴿ قَالَ عَفْرَيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ ﴾

“One audacious among the jinn said: I will bring it to you before you rise up from your place; and most surely I am strong (and) trusty for it.”²⁶

9. They possess the power to perform some of the tasks that are required by man:

﴿ وَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ مَن يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَ مَن يَزِغُ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقُهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبَ وَ تَمَاثِيلَ وَ جِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ ﴾

“And of the jinn there were those who worked before him by the command of his Lord; and whoever turned aside from Our command from among them, We made him taste of the punishment of burning. They made for him what he pleased of fortresses and images, and bowls (large) as watering-troughs and cooking-pots that will not move from their place.”²⁷

10. Their creation on the earth was prior to man’s creation:

﴿ وَ الْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُومِ ﴾

²⁵ *Sūratul Jinn* (72), Verse 6

²⁶ *Sūratul Naml* (27), Verse 39

²⁷ *Sūrat Saba* (34), Verses 12, 13

“And the jinn We created before, of intensely hot fire.”²⁸

In addition, it can be clearly inferred from the verses of the Noble Qur’ān that, contrary to what is popular amongst the common masses, humans are a species superior to them. This can be concluded by the fact that all the divine prophets had been chosen from the humans; moreover, many jinn too had believed in the Noble Prophet ﷺ - who was a human - and pledged allegiance to him. Additionally, the obligation upon the Shayṭān of prostrating before Ādam at a time when he (the Shayṭān), according to the explicit statements of the Qur’ān, had been of the elders of the Jinn²⁹, further reinforces this idea of superiority.

The discussion thus far has revolved around the aspects that can be inferred about this invisible entity from the Noble Qur’ān, which is devoid of all superstitions and non-scientific issues. However, we do know that the general and the unaware masses have concocted great superstitions about this entity which neither conforms with logic nor intellect, and consequently have imparted an irrational appearance to this being such that whenever the word ‘jinn’ is uttered, a handful of strange ideas immediately come to mind – entities possessing dreadful appearances, who have horns and tails, are harmful, troublesome, malicious and ill-mannered, who can set a house on fire by pouring a cauldron of boiling water in one corner of the house! These are examples of such fanciful and superstitious beliefs!

If our perspective of the existence of jinn is purified from such superstitions, the main issue is totally acceptable for, there exists no reasoning to restrict living entities to only those that can be seen by us. On the contrary, scholars of natural sciences state: The entities that man can perceive by means of his senses are marginal in comparison to those that cannot be perceived by means of them.

²⁸ *Sūratul Hījr* (15), Verse 27

²⁹ *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 50

Prior to the discovery of microscopic organisms, no one would have believed that in one drop of water or blood, there existed hundreds of thousands of living entities that man could not see.

The scientists also state: Our eyes can perceive a limited (range of) colours and our ears can hear a limited (range of) sound waves; the colours and sounds that cannot be perceived by means of our eyes and ears are more numerous than those that can be perceived by them.

When the state of the world is such, why should the existence of a species of living entities, whom we cannot perceive by means of our senses, be so fantastic and astonishing? And why should we not accept it when we have been informed of it by a truthful informer like the Noble Prophet ﷺ?

In any event, on the one hand, the Qurʾān has informed us of the existence of the jinn possessing the aforementioned characteristics; while on the other hand, there exists no rational proofs which deny the existence of such an entity. Accordingly, we ought to accept their existence but simultaneously disregard the inappropriate superstitions of the general public in connection with these beings.

It is important to note that at times, the term jinn is used in a more expansive meaning – one that tends to encompass a number of invisible entities, irrespective of whether they possess intellect and perception or not. In this expanded meaning of the word, even animals that are not seen by the eyes, usually remaining hidden in their lairs, are included.

This is proved by a tradition of the Commander of the Faithful (عليه السلام) wherein he says: “Allāh has created the jinn in five kinds – some are like the wind in the air (invisible), some are in the form of snakes, some in the form of scorpions, some in the form of the insects of the earth while some are like the humans and they shall be subjected to Reckoning and punishment.”³⁰

³⁰ *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 186 (under جن)

In the light of the above tradition and its expansive meaning, numerous problems encountered in narratives with respect to the jinn appear to be solved.

For example, in some of the traditions of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام, we read:

لَا تَشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ مِنْ ثُلْمَةِ الْإِنَاءِ وَلَا مِنْ عُرْوَتِهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَقْعُدُ عَلَى الْعُرْوَةِ وَالثُّلْمَةِ.

“Do not drink water from the broken portion of the vessel nor from the portion of the handle, for surely, the Shayṭān sits upon the handle and the broken portion.”³¹

In view of the fact that Shayṭān is from the jinn, and knowing the fact that the broken portion of the vessel and similarly its handle are places of accumulation of numerous microbes, it does not appear too far-fetched that jinn and Shayṭān, in their expansive meanings, should also include these entities too, in addition to possessing a specific meaning, i.e. an entity, who possesses understanding, intelligence and religious obligation.

And traditions in this regard are numerous.^{32 and 33}

9. What is the reality Of Angels?

The Noble Qur’ān has spoken about the angels on numerous occasions with a great number of verses speaking of their attributes, characteristics and responsibilities. So much so that the Qur’ān places the issue of belief in the angels at par with belief in Allāh ﷻ, the prophets and the Divine books, and this itself is proof of the fundamental importance of this issue.

³¹ *al-Kāfi*, vol. 6, pg. 385, Kitāb al-At’imah wa al-Ashribah, Chapter Bāb al-Awāni, no. 5.

³² In vol. 1 of the book *Awwālīn Dānishgāh Wa Aakhirīn Payām*, approximately 20 traditions have been compiled in this regard.

³³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 25, pg. 154

﴿ آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ﴾

“The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers.”³⁴

Undoubtedly, the existence of the angels is one of the issues of the *ghaib* (Unseen) and therefore, proving their existence and their characteristics cannot be accomplished except by means of transmitted proofs; hence, we ought to accept them according to the ruling of ‘believing in the Unseen’.

The Qur’ān mentions their characteristics as follows:

1. The angels are entities that possess intelligence and comprehension, and are the honourable servants of Allāh ﷻ.

﴿ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴾

“Nay! they are honored servants.”³⁵

2. They are totally subservient to Allāh ﷻ and never exhibit insubordination towards Him.

﴿ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

“They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act.”³⁶

3. They have been assigned important and greatly varied responsibilities on the part of Allāh ﷻ.

A group upholds the ‘Arsh (Throne).³⁷

A group ‘regulates the affair’.³⁸

³⁴ *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 285

³⁵ *Sūratul Anbiyā* (21), Verse 26

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Verse 27

³⁷ *Sūratul Ḥāqqah* (69), Verse 17

A group of them are for the seizing of the souls.³⁹

A group is vigilant of the deeds of the humans.⁴⁰

A group protects humans from perils and untoward incidents.⁴¹

A group is responsible for punishing and chastising the rebellious and recalcitrant nations.⁴²

Some angels are divine helpers for the believers during battles.⁴³

And finally some of the angels bring down the Revelation and the Divine books for the prophets...⁴⁴

...And if we were to enumerate each of their duties, the discussion would become greatly protracted.

4. They are perpetually engaged in glorifying and sanctifying Allāh ﷻ, as we read in verse 5 of Sūratul Shūra.

﴿ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾

“And the angels sing the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth.”

5. Despite all the above, man, due to his ability to develop and achieve perfection, is superior to them to the extent that all the angels, without exception, fell into prostration when Ādam ﷺ was created and he became their teacher.⁴⁵

6. Occasionally they take the form of humans and manifest themselves before the prophets and even individuals who are not prophets, as we read in the chapter Maryam ﷻ that a great angel appeared before Maryam ﷻ in the form of a ‘perfect’ man.

³⁸ Sūratul Nāzi‘at (79), Verse 5

³⁹ Sūratul A‘rāf (7), 37

⁴⁰ Sūratul Infīṭār (82), Verse 10 – 13

⁴¹ Sūratul An‘ām (6), Verse 61

⁴² Sūrat Hūd (11), Verse 77

⁴³ Sūratul Aḥzāb (33), Verse 9

⁴⁴ Sūratul Naḥl (16), Verse 2

⁴⁵ Sūratul Baqarah (2), Verse 30 – 34

﴿فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا﴾

“Then We sent to her Our spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man.”⁴⁶

On other occasions they appeared before prophets Ibrāhīm and Lūṭ عليهما السلام in the form of humans.⁴⁷

From the end of these verses it can also be inferred that the people of prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام too witnessed them in that ‘measured’ human form.⁴⁸

Is this appearance in the human form an objective reality? Or was it an imagination or a kind of seizing of the eyes? The apparent meaning of the verses seem to indicate the first meaning, although some distinguished commentators have opted for the second view.

1. From the Islamic traditions it can be inferred that they are so numerous that their numbers cannot be compared to the humans at all. We read in a tradition that Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام was asked: Are the angels more in number or the humans? Whereupon he عليه السلام replied: “By Allāh, in Whose grasp is my soul! The angels of Allāh that are present in the heavens are more than the particles of sand present on the earth; in the heavens there does not exist a place to put one’s foot except that there is an angel there, engaged in glorifying and sanctifying Allāh.”⁴⁹

2. They do not eat and drink, and neither do they marry. In a tradition Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says: The angels do not eat food, do not drink water and do not marry, rather, they stay alive by means of the zephyr of Allāh’s ‘Arsh (Throne)!⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Sūrat Maryam* (19), Verse 17

⁴⁷ *Sūrat Hūd* (11), 69, 77

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Verse 78

⁴⁹ *Bihārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 176, no. 7. There are numerous other traditions too that have been mentioned in this regard.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 174, no. 4

3. They are not overcome by sleep, lethargy and heedlessness. Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام says: In them there is no lassitude, heedlessness and disobedience. Sleep never prevails over them, their intellects are never overcome by inadvertence and forgetfulness, their bodies never experience lethargy, and they are never ensconced in the loins of fathers and the wombs of mothers.⁵¹

4. They possess different grades and varied ranks; some are always in a state of rukū‘ while others are perpetually in a state of prostration.

﴿وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُّونَ وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ﴾

“And there is none of us but has an assigned place, and most surely we are they who draw themselves out in ranks, and we are most surely they who declare the glory (of Allāh).”⁵²

Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said: “Allāh possesses certain angels, who are in (a state of) rukū‘ (and shall continue to remain so) until the Day of Judgment, and certain angels, who are in (a state of) sajdah, (and shall continue to remain so) until the Day of Judgment.”⁵³

(For further information about their characteristics and categories, refer to ‘The Chapter of Angels’ of the section *السَّمَاءُ وَالْعَالَم* of the book *Biḥārul Anwār* (vol. 59, pp. 144–326) and *Nahjul Balāghah*, Sermons 1, 91, 109 and 171.)

Question

In view of the characteristics that have been mentioned above, are angels corporeal or non-corporeal entities?

Undoubtedly, with the characteristics that they possess, they cannot be constituted of this lowly and elemental matter;

⁵¹ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 175

⁵² *Sūratul Ṣāffāt* (37), Verse 164 – 166

⁵³ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 174

nevertheless it is possible for them to have been created out of subtle material elements – material elements that are superior to this ordinary matter familiar to us.

Proving absolute immateriality for the angels - immateriality with respect to place, time and parts - is not an easy task and furthermore, research on this subject does not possess that great a benefit. The important thing is that we recognize the angels according to the attributes that have been mentioned by the Qur'ān and the conclusive Islamic traditions, and regard them as a huge assemblage of lofty and preeminent entities of Allāh ﷻ without attributing any status to them except that of servitude and slavery (of Allāh ﷻ) and without regarding them as being partners to Allāh ﷻ in creation and worship, for then this would be downright polytheism and kufr.

In connection with the angels we content ourselves with what has been discussed and leave the details for books, specifically devoted to this topic.

In numerous expressions of the Torah the angels have been referred to as Gods - an expression enshrouded with polytheism and one of the signs of the distortion of the present Torah. But the Noble Qur'ān is pure from such expressions for it does not ascribe to them any rank except that of servitude, worship and execution of Allāh's ﷻ commands. Moreover, as we have previously mentioned, it is apparent from various verses of the Qur'ān that the rank of the Perfect Man is loftier and more exalted than that of the angels.⁵⁴

10. What is 'Raj'at (the Return)? Is its occurrence possible?

Raja't is one of the popular Shī'ite beliefs and its explanation, briefly, is as follows:

After the reappearance of Imām Mahdī ﷺ and on the threshold of Resurrection, a group of the sincere mu'mineen and a group of the immensely wicked disbelievers and rebellious individuals shall

⁵⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 18, pg. 173

return to this world. The first group shall subsequently advance several ranks towards perfection whilst the second group would taste a severe chastisement.

The late Sayyid Murtaḍā, one of the greatly distinguished scholars, explains as follows: “After the reappearance of Haḍrat Mahdī ﷺ, the Exalted Allāh shall cause group of those, who had previously departed from the world, to return to this world in order that they may be partners in the reward and glory of assisting him ﷺ and in witnessing Allāh’s rule over the entire world; He shall also cause the most obstinate enemies to return in order to extract revenge from them.”

He then adds: “No intellectual person can ever claim that Allāh does not possess the power to cause this occurrence to happen and, since this cannot be considered to be impossible, it is itself a proof of the truthfulness of this issue. Nonetheless, our opponents reject this so vehemently as if they regard it to be an event that is inconceivable.”

He then further adds: “The consensus of the Twelve-Imām Shī’ites proves this belief, for there is none, from amongst them, who oppose it.”⁵⁵

Nevertheless, from the statements of some of the scholars and also from the words of late Ṭabrisī in his book *Majma’ul Bayān*, it appears that a minority from amongst the Shī’ites had opposed this belief, interpreting *Raj’at* to mean the return of the rule and government of the Ahlul Bayt ﷺ and not the return of the people and coming to life of the dead. However, they are few in number and accordingly do not injure the consensus.

There are indeed numerous aspects that need to be discussed which we shall present here, in a few words, so as not to deviate from the subject matter:

1. Without any doubt, for a group of dead individuals to come back to life in this world is entirely possible, just as the coming to life of

⁵⁵ *Safinatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 511 (under راجع.)

all the humans on the Day of Judgment is entirely possible. Astonishment over such an issue is akin to the disbelief exhibited by the pagan polytheists over the issue of Resurrection, and mockery with respect to this issue is analogous to their mockery. This is because the intellect does not consider such an occurrence to be impossible; indeed the Power of Allāh ﷻ is so extensive and all-embracing that for Him all these issues are simple.

2. In the Noble Qurʾān there are five instances of rajʾat, occurring with respect to past nations:

a. Regarding a prophet, who passed by a settlement which lay in ruins while the bodies of its inhabitants lay scattered. He asked himself as to how Allāh ﷻ would bring them to life after they have died whereupon Allāh ﷻ made him to die for one hundred years and then, bringing him to life, asked: “How long have you tarried? He replied: A day or a part of it. He was told: No. A hundred years have passed by you.”⁵⁶

Whether this prophet had been ʿUzayr or someone else does not make a difference. The significant point is the explicit declaration of the Qurʾān about life after death in this world itself.

﴿فَأَمَّا اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ﴾

“So Allāh made him die for a hundred years, then raised him to life.”

b. In verse 243 of Sūratul Baqarah, the Qurʾān speaks about a group of individuals, who, out of fear of death (and according to some commentators, under the pretext of plague had refrained from participating in the jihād) had stepped out of their houses, whereupon Allāh ﷻ commanded them to die and then raised them to life again.

﴿فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ﴾

“Allāh said to them: ‘Die’: Then He restored them to life.”

⁵⁶ Sūratul Baqarah (2), Verse 259

Some commentators, who have been unable to digest the occurrence of such an unusual incident, have regarded it as just a presentation of an example. However, it is plain that such interpretations, vis-à-vis the apparent meaning and the explicit statements of the verse in connection with the occurrence of this issue, are unacceptable.

c. In verses 55 and 56 of Sūratul Baqarah, which are in connection with the tribe of Banī Isrāʼīl, we read that a group from amongst them, desiring to see Allāh ﷻ, were overcome by a deadly lightning and died, after which, Allāh ﷻ brought them back to life in order that they may thank Him for His bounties.

﴿ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

“Then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks.”

d. Verse 110 of Sūratul Māidah, while enumerating the miracles of Prophet ʿIsā ﷺ, states:

﴿وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي﴾

“And when you brought forth the dead by My permission.”

This expression indicates that ʿIsā ﷺ made use of this miracle (bringing the dead to life) of his; moreover, the imperfect tense of the word تُخْرِجُ indicates repetition, which itself can be regarded as a kind of Rajʿat (for those whom he ﷺ brought back to life).

e. And finally, in verse 73 of Sūratul Baqarah, when there arose a dispute and disagreement amongst the Banī Isrāʼīl with respect to unearthing the killer of a murdered person, the Qurʾān says that they were ordered to sacrifice a cow possessing certain specific features, and to tap a part of its body upon the body of the murdered person in order that the person may return to life (and disclose the name of his murderer thereby putting an end to the dispute)

﴿فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بَبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَ يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“So We said: Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow), thus Allāh brings the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand.”

Apart from these five instances, there are other occasions which are observed in the Noble Qur’ān – such as the story of the People of the Cave which is also something similar to raj’at, and the story of the four birds of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ that are brought back to life after being sacrificed in order to demonstrate for him the possibility of the resurrection of man - an incident, which is very significant when discussing raj’at.

Accordingly, how is it possible that a person accepts the Noble Qur’ān as a Divine book and, despite all these clear verses, still denies the possibility of raj’at? Essentially, is raj’at something other than a return to life after death?

Can raj’at not be regarded as a small example of Resurrection, in this small world? How can one, who accepts Resurrection in that extensive scale, reject the issue of raj’at? Or ridicule its concept? Or speak like Aḥmad Amīn Miṣrī, who, in his book *Fajrul Islām*, writes:

الْيَهُودِيَّةُ ظَهَرَتْ بِالتَّشْبِيحِ بِالقَوْلِ بِالرَّجْعَةِ.

“Another Judaism has manifested in Shī‘ism due to the concept of raj’at!”⁵⁷

Honestly, what difference lies between this statement of Aḥmad Amīn and the disavowal of physical resurrection by the pagan Arabs?

3. What we have stated up to this point has proved the possibility of the occurrence of raj’at; and its occurrence is emphasized by

⁵⁷ *‘Aqā'idul Imāmiyyah* of Sheikh Muḥammad Riḍā Muḍaffar, pg. 71

numerous traditions which have been narrated from the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, and since it is beyond the scope of our discussion to present them all, it should suffice for us to quote the statistics compiled by the late ‘Allāmah Majlisī, who says:

How is it possible that a person believes in the truthfulness of the words of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام but (at the same time) refuses to accept the ‘successively transmitted’ traditions in connection with raj‘at - explicit traditions, which are almost two hundred in number and transmitted by forty odd trustworthy transmitters and eminent scholars in more than fifty books! If these traditions are not ‘successively transmitted’, then which tradition can be such?^{58 and 59}

11. What is the philosophy of Raj‘at?

From Islamic traditions, it can be inferred that this issue is confined to those righteous believers, who possess an elevated rank with respect to their faith, and similarly disbelievers, who are placed at a low-grade rank with respect to their disbelief. It appears that the return of these two groups into the world is for the purpose of completing a circle of perfection in the case of the first group and tasting worldly chastisement regarding the second group.

The wisdom of Allāh ﷻ necessitates that the group of sincere believers - who, in their journey towards spiritual perfection, had come across obstructions in their life due to which their development had been left incomplete - continue their journey towards perfection by being brought back into this world. They shall then witness the universal government of truth and justice, and participate in the establishment of this system. This is because participation in the establishment of such a government is one of the greatest distinctions (for man).

⁵⁸ *Bihārul Anwār*, vol. 53, pg. 122

⁵⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 15, pg. 555

On the contrary, the group of obstinate tyrants, apart from their special chastisement on the Day of Judgment, should also be punished in this world like the punishment tasted by obstinate nations such as ‘Ād, Thamūd, the people of Fir‘awn and Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام, and the only way to accomplish this is by means of raj‘at.

In a tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says:

إِنَّ الرَّجْعَةَ لَيْسَتْ عَامَّةً وَهِيَ خَاصَّةٌ، لَا يَرْجِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ مَحَضَ الْإِيمَانَ
مَحَضاً أَوْ مَحَضَ الشِّرْكَ مَحَضاً.

“Surely the raj‘at is not universal, but specific; only those shall be returned, who are downright pure in faith or downright pure in polytheism.”⁶⁰

It is possible that verse 95 of Sūratul Anbiyā, which states:

﴿وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ﴾

“And it is binding on a town which We destroy that they shall not return)” is also an allusion towards this meaning. This is because the issue of non-return is stated in connection with those, who have tasted their punishments in this world; thus, it becomes manifest that those, who have not witnessed their punishments, ought to return and taste it.

Another possibility that exists is that the return of these two groups in that specific phase of human history is to present before mankind two important signs – the power of Allāh ﷻ and the issue of Resurrection (the Origin and the End) – in order that by witnessing it they reach the zenith of their faith and spiritual perfection, and do not possess any kind of shortcoming.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Bihārul Anwār*, vol. 53, pg. 39

⁶¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 15, pg. 559

12. What is the reality of Tawakkul⁶² and what is its philosophy?

The word tawakkul has been derived from وكالت (wakālat), meaning 'taking for oneself a representative', and a good representative generally possesses the following four characteristics: Awareness, Trustworthiness, Strength and Sympathy.

It might not appear necessary to mention that one selects a barrister for a task when the individual lacks the strength to defend himself. He therefore seeks the strength of another person and uses his assistance to solve his personal problem.

Accordingly tawakkul means that man, in the face of the difficulties of life, enmity and troubles of opponents, the tangles of existence which hinder his journey towards his objectives, and in instances wherein he finds himself unable to untie the knots, takes Allāh ﷻ as his support but, at the same time, does not stop his own efforts and endeavours. Rather, in those instances too, wherein he possesses the strength to perform the work, he looks upon Allāh ﷻ as the fundamental influencing force. This is because in the eyes of a (true) monotheist, He is the source of all strength and power.

Contrary to the attribute of 'relying on Allāh ﷻ' is 'relying on other than Him' - meaning living dependently upon someone else and not possessing self independence.

Scholars of ethics state: Tawakkul is the direct outcome of 'Unity of Divine acts'; this is because, as we have mentioned previously, in the eyes of a monotheist every motion, endeavour, movement and occurrence that takes place in this world eventually finds a connection with the Primary Cause of this world i.e. Allāh ﷻ; consequently, a monotheist regards every strength and power to originate from Him.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF 'TAWAKKUL'

In the light of our previous statements, it can be inferred that:

⁶² Relying on Allāh (Tr.)

Firstly: Relying on Allāh ﷻ - the interminable Source of power and strength - causes man to become more resilient in the face of the troubles and adversities of life. An example of this is when the Muslims suffered a severe blow in the battle of Uhud and the enemies, after having abandoned the battlefield, decided to return once again midway from their journey (back home) with the aim of inflicting a final blow upon the Muslims. The Qur'ān states that when the Muslims were informed of this, those who possessed firm faith were untouched by fright in this extremely dangerous moment when they had lost most of their active forces. On the contrary, placing their reliance on Allāh ﷻ and seeking assistance from the power of faith, they increased themselves in firmness and resistance. As a result the victorious enemies, being informed of this, hastily retraced their advance.⁶³

Examples of such resistance, under the light of tawakkul, are observed in numerous verses, amongst them being verse 122 of Sūrat Āle 'Imrān, in which the Qur'ān says that reliance on Allāh prevented the two groups of soldiers from being overcome with lassitude, in the battlefield.

In verse 12 of Sūrat Ibrāhīm it has been mentioned that tawakkul should be accompanied by patience in the face of the attacks of the enemy.

In verse 159 of Sūrat Āle 'Imrān it has been ordered that when intending to perform an important task, initially consultation should take place; this should be followed up by a firm decision after which, one should place one's reliance on Allāh (and proceed in accordance with the decision taken).

The Qur'ān even says that only those, who possess faith and tawakkul, shall be able to exhibit resistance vis-à-vis satanic whisperings and not be influenced by them.

⁶³ *Sūrat Āle 'Imrān* (3), Verse 173

﴿إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ﴾

“Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord.”⁶⁴

From the entire collection of these verses it can be concluded that tawakkul means that man, in the face of problems, does not experience a feeling of weakness and inferiority, but instead considers himself victorious by relying on the infinite power of Allāh ﷻ. Thus, tawakkul is a hope-inspiring, energy-insulating and reinforcing factor which increases perseverance and resistance.

If the concept of tawakkul meant taking to a corner and sitting idle, it would be meaningless to attribute it to the soldiers and the likes of them.

And if some believe that resorting to various means and natural factors is not in conformity with the spirit of tawakkul, they are mistaken. This is because endeavouring to separate the effects of natural causes from the Will of Allāh ﷻ is a kind of polytheism. But is it not a fact that whatever the natural causes possess is from Him alone? And is it not that everything is in accordance with His Will and command? Yes, if we were to regard the causes and means to be an independent apparatus as opposed to Allāh’s Will, this would be incompatible with the spirit of tawakkul. (Do note).

How is it possible to interpret tawakkul in this manner when the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the leader of those who exhibited tawakkul, had never been heedless of utilizing every opportunity, appropriate plan and other exterior means for furthering his aims and objectives; all these only go to prove that the meaning of tawakkul does not have that negative dimension attached to it at all.

Secondly: Relying on Allāh ﷻ delivers man from being dependent (on others) – a state, which is the source of humiliation – and imparts freedom and self-confidence to him.

⁶⁴ *Sūratul Naḥl* (16), Verse 99

At this point we present some of the traditions in connection with tawakkul for the purpose of illuminating its actual meaning.

Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says:

إِنَّ الْعِنْسِيَّ وَالْعِزَّ يَجُولَانِ فَإِذَا ظَفِرَا بِمَوْضِعِ التَّوَكُّلِ أُوطِنَا.

“Verily, independence and honour are in (a state of) travel and when they come to the place of ‘tawakkul’ they take up residence there.”⁶⁵

In this tradition, tawakkul has been presented as being the actual dwelling place of independence and honour.

It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله said: I asked Jibraīl: “What is ‘tawakkul’?” He replied: “Cognizance (of the fact) that the creation (of Allāh) can neither cause harm nor yield benefit; neither can it grant nor withhold (a bounty); (one must) sever all expectations from the creation (of Allāh). When a person becomes such, he shall never work for anyone other than Allāh and shall never hope and expect from anyone other than Him, and this is the reality of ‘tawakkul’.”⁶⁶

Once someone questioned Imām ‘Alī ibne Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام:⁶⁷

مَا حَدُّ التَّوَكُّلِ؟ فَقَالَ أَنْ لَا تَخَافَ مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا.

“What is the extent of ‘tawakkul’? He عليه السلام replied: That you do not fear anyone once you have relied on Allāh!”^{68 and 69}

⁶⁵ *al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, Chapter al-Tawakkul Ilallāh Wa al-Tawakkul ‘Alaihī, no. 3

⁶⁶ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 15, Part 2 Fī al-Akhlāq, pg. 14 (Old Publication)

⁶⁷ *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 2, pg. 682

⁶⁸ For more explanations in connection ‘tawakkul’ and other such issues, refer the book *Angīzah-e-Paidāish-e-Madhhab*.

⁶⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 10, pg. 295

13. What is the philosophy behind Du‘ā and Invocations?

Those, who have not comprehended the reality of du‘ā, and its educative and psychological effects, have levelled various objections against it:

At times they say: Du‘ā brings about a state of narcosis within people for, instead of exhorting them towards effort and utilization of advanced means, it directs them towards supplications and teaches them that they should pray, rather than exert themselves!

And occasionally they say: Basically, is supplicating not interference in Allāh’s ﷻ work? Allāh ﷻ performs whatever He deems to be the best; He loves us and knows better than us what is best for us and so, why should we seek things from Him at times as we please?

At other times they say: Apart from all these, does du‘ā not conflict with the attribute of riḍa⁷⁰ and taslīm⁷¹?

Those who propound these objections are oblivious of the psychological, social, educative and spiritual effects of supplication. This is because man, in order to strengthen his determination, and eliminate his distresses, is occasionally in need of a support, and it is the du‘ā that lights up the lamp of hope within him.

People, who neglect du‘ā and supplication, shall eventually face undesirable social and psychological effects in the long run.

In the words of a well-known psychologist: “Absence of invocations amongst a nation is equivalent to the collapse of that nation! A society that has strangulated within itself the need for invocations is usually not safeguarded from degradation and degeneration. Of course, it should not be forgotten that invoking only in the mornings while passing the entire day akin to barbarians, is futile; supplications ought to be performed continuously and in every

⁷⁰ Satisfaction and pleasure over divine decree. (Tr.)

⁷¹ Submission to Allāh ﷻ. (Tr.)

state, and care should be taken to ensure that its profound influence upon man is not lost.”⁷²

Those, who claim that *du‘ā* possesses a narcotic effect, have failed to comprehend the meaning of *du‘ā*. Supplicating to Allāh ﷻ does not mean that we withdraw ourselves from all the natural means that lie at our disposal and instead, raise our hands and set about praying; rather, it means that after utilizing all the means available before us to the best of our abilities and if we fall short, we resort to *du‘ā* and, by turning towards and leaning on Allāh ﷻ, we invigorate within ourselves the spirit of hope, seeking succour from the unfailing assistance of the Great Origin.

Accordingly *du‘ā* is confined to inadequacies and dead-ends, and not a means that acts as a substitute for natural factors.

Although invocations induce serenity, at the same time, they also stimulate a kind of amazement and internal expansion with respect to cerebral activities, and occasionally also inspire a spirit of courageousness and heroism within man. Invocations make manifest our excellences with unique indications – pure look, composed behaviour, internal expansion and happiness, firm conviction, ability to accept guidance and confront the adversities. These are the things that indicate upon the existence of a concealed treasure deep within us, and by means of this strength, even those who are backward and less capable can better utilize their mental and ethical abilities, and derive greater benefits. However, it is rather unfortunate that in our present world, those who can comprehend (the concept of) supplication correctly are very few indeed.⁷³

From what we have stated above, the answer to the objection that the concept of *du‘ā* is inconsistent with *riḍā* and *taslīm* also becomes clear. This is because *du‘ā*, as has been explained above, is a kind of

⁷² *Niyāyish* – a Persian translation of a book written by the well-known doctor and psychologist Alexis Carrol.

⁷³ As written by Alexis Carrol.

quest for the ability to acquire a greater share of the infinite grace and blessings of Allāh ﷻ.

In other words man, by means of du‘ā, develops within himself a great worthiness for acquiring increased blessings of Allāh ﷻ, and it is self-evident that exertion towards perfection is, in reality, taslīm in the face of the laws of creation and not something in contrast to it.

Additionally, du‘ā is a kind of worship, (and an exhibition of) servitude, and by means of it man achieves a fresh attentiveness towards Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, just as all the other acts of worship possess an educative influence, du‘ā too possesses such an influence.

And when they say that du‘ā is interference in Allāh’s ﷻ work! Allāh ﷻ does whatever is advisable and prudent, they have overlooked the fact that distribution of Allāh’s ﷻ bounties is dictated by capability - the greater the capacity, the greater shall be the share of the Divine gifts that shall come a person’s way.

And it is for this reason that Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said:

إِنَّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنزِلَةً لَا تُنَالُ إِلَّا بِمَسْأَلَةٍ.

“Allāh has ordained ranks, which cannot be achieved except by means of supplication.”⁷⁴

A scholar has stated: “When we supplicate, we link and associate ourselves to the infinite Power, Who has interconnected the entire universe.”⁷⁵

He also states: “Today, the most recent science, i.e. psychiatry, teaches the same things that the prophets used to teach. Why? The reason being that psychiatrists have discovered that du‘ā, prayers and possessing a firm conviction with respect to religion eliminates

⁷⁴ *al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, pg. 338, Chapter Fadhl al-Du‘ā Wa al-Haththu ‘Alaihī, no. 3

⁷⁵ *Aaīn-e-Zindagī*, pg. 156

worries, anxieties, agitations and fear – factors that are cause for more than half of our inconveniences.”⁷⁶ and ⁷⁷

14. Why is it that our supplications occasionally remain unanswered?

Attention towards the conditions for the acceptance of prayers reveals new realities in the issue of du‘ā, and manifests its constructive influence. In the Islamic traditions, some of the conditions (to be taken into regard) for the purpose of acceptance of one’s prayers are as follows:

In order to have the prayers answered, first of all one should strive for the purification of the mind and soul, be repentant over (past) sins, embark upon development of the self and seek inspiration from the lives of divine leaders.

It has been reported that Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام said: Let it never be that any of you seeks a thing from Allāh except that he first praises and glorifies Him, sends salutations upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his holy progeny, confesses to his sins and exhibits repentance over them; after having done these, he should then seek his desire from Him.⁷⁸

Endeavouring to have a pure life, free from usurped riches, oppression and injustice, and to refrain from acquiring one’s livelihood by illegal means.

It has been reported that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُسْتَجَابَ دُعَاؤُهُ فَلْيُطِيبْ مَطْعَمَهُ وَ مَكْسَبَهُ.

“One who desires to have his supplications answered, should purify his food and earnings.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., pg. 152

⁷⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 639

⁷⁸ *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 448, 449

⁷⁹ Ibid.

One should not desist from combating evil and inviting others towards Allāh ﷻ.

This is because the supplications of those, who forsake ‘enjoining the good and forbidding the evil’, are not answered. The Noble Prophet ﷺ has said: “You must enjoin the good and forbid the evil or else Allāh will cause the evil ones to prevail over the righteous ones from amongst you, and however much they may pray, (their prayers) shall not be answered!”⁸⁰

In fact, abandoning this great duty of ‘national supervision’ leads to turmoil within the society as a result of which the society would be left open for the evil ones; (when this happens) supplications for the elimination of the consequences arising out of this state would be futile since this state has resulted out of man’s own deeds.

ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIVINE COVENANTS

Faith, good deeds, trustworthiness, and righteousness, (collectively) form another of the conditions for the acceptance of prayers. This is because one who is not faithful to his pledge with respect to Allāh ﷻ, should likewise not expect Allāh’s ﷻ promise of answering a supplicant to be true for him too.

A person once, complaining to the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ about his prayers not being answered, said: Despite the fact that Allāh has said “Call upon Me, I will answer you”, why is it that when we supplicate to him, He does not answer our prayers?

The Imām ﷺ replied:

إِنَّ قُلُوبَكُمْ خَانَ بِثَمَنِيَةِ خِصَالٍ.

“Your hearts (and thoughts) have been unfaithful with respect to eight things (and this is the reason your prayers go unanswered).”

⁸⁰ Ibid.

1. You have acquired the cognizance of Allāh ﷻ but you do not fulfill what is due to Him; consequently your cognizance of Him has not benefited your state!
2. You have brought faith upon His Messenger but (later) went on to oppose his customs; where then is the yield of your faith?
3. You have read His book but have not acted upon it; you stated: “We have heard and we obey”, but then rose up in opposition to it!
4. You say: “We fear Allāh’s punishment”, but perpetually perform acts that lead you closer to it.
5. You claim to be covetous of Allāh’s reward however you continue to perform acts that lead you away from it.
6. You consume Allāh’s bounties but do not extend thanksgivings to Him.
7. You have been ordered to be Shayṭān’s enemy (whereas you sketch plans to befriend him); you claim to be his enemy but, in practice, you do not oppose him.
8. You place into great scrutiny the faults of others but conveniently disregard your own; with such a state of affairs, how do you expect your prayers to be answered when you yourself have shut its doors? Be pious, rectify your deeds and enjoin the good and forbid the evil so that your prayers are answered.”⁸¹

This meaningful tradition explicitly states: “Allāh’s promise to answer the invocations of a supplicant is not absolute, but conditional - the condition being that you should fulfill your own pledges and covenants; however the reality is that you have broken your pledge in eight ways. If you were to put an end to these, your prayers would be answered.”

Another condition for the acceptance of one’s prayers is to adjoin it with efforts and hard work. In one of the short sayings of the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ we read:

⁸¹ *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 1, pg. 448

أَلَدَّاعِي بِلَا عَمَلٍ كَالرَّامِي بِلَا وَتَرٍ.

“A supplicant (who prays) without effort and endeavour is like an archer without a bowstring!”⁸²

In view of the fact that the bowstring is a means to propel the arrow towards the target, the influence of ‘effort’ in the effectiveness of du‘ā becomes evident.

The above five conditions are illustrative of the reality that not only should du‘ā not become a substitute for the natural means and ordinary measures with the purpose of achieving an objective but rather, in order for it to be answered, there ought to occur a complete transformation in the life of the supplicant - his outlook ought to be overhauled and his past deeds reviewed.

In view of the above, does it not appear that characterizing du‘ā as being narcotic and soporific indicates either a lack of knowledge or a sinister motive?⁸³

15. What is Islam’s perspective with regards to Jabr (compulsion) and Ikhtiyār (free-choice)?

This problem is an ancient issue that had been the bone of contention of scholars; a group advocating freedom of will while another supporting compulsion and each of them presenting proofs to substantiate their viewpoints.

But interestingly, in practice, both these groups have formally recognized and accepted the notion of choice and freedom of will. In other words all these debates are only within the periphery of theoretical discussion and not in practice, clearly revealing that the concept of freedom of will is inherent to every person. And were it not for the various insinuations and whisperings, everybody would have supported this concept.

⁸² *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Sayings 337

⁸³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 643

This general conscience and universal innate - one of the most lucid of all the proofs for ikhtiyār (freedom of choice) - manifests itself in various forms in man's life; if man considered himself to be compelled in the performance of his deeds and to not possess any choice, why is it that: At times, as a result of performance or non-performance of an act, man experiences a sense of regret, and resolves to utilize his experience in the future. This state of regret occurs numerously for those who advocate the concept of jabr (compulsion); if there is no ikhtiyār, why this rue and remorse?

Everyone rebukes and censures the evil-doers; if there is jabr, why should they be rebuked in such a manner?

Those who do good deeds are praised and commended?

Everyone strives to educate their children in order that they become successful and fortunate; if everyone is compelled (in the performance of his deeds); what is the point in educating them?

All the scholars, without exception, exert themselves for the purpose of raising the standard of ethics in society?

Man expresses repentance over his blunders; if the concept of jabr is accepted, repentance becomes meaningless.

Man rues his shortcomings; why?

Universally, the criminals are subjected to trials and are exposed to intense interrogation; are these acts that are beyond one's choice and free-will and need no interrogation and trials?

All over the world and within all communities - irrespective of whether they are materialists or Allāh-worshippers - punishments have been prescribed for the criminals. But are these punishments for acts that they were compelled to perform?!

When someone transgresses upon their interests, even the advocates of the doctrine of jabr clamour for justice and, considering him to be guilty, drag him to the courts of law!

In short, if man truly had no choice of his own, what could repentance possibly mean? Why then the reproach and censure? Can one, whose hands and feet tremble involuntarily, be rebuked and criticized?

Why are those, who perform good acts, praised and encouraged? But do they possess choice of their own that they shall continue their good acts as a result of this encouragement?

Basically, with the acknowledgement of the influence of education, the concept of jabr breaks down. In addition, issues related to ethics, without acknowledging the concept of freedom of will, become totally meaningless.

If we are compelled in our acts, what is the meaning of repentance? Why should one yearn and rue? Placing a compelled person on trial is one of the most oppressive of acts, and punishing him is worse.

All these indicate that the concept of freedom of will is inherent to all humans, and in accordance with the conscience of the entire mankind. It is not just the general public, but even the learned class, the philosophers and the proponents of jabr too, in practice, accept ikhtiyār.

الْجَبْرِيُّونَ اخْتِيَارِيُّونَ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ!

“Those, who profess the doctrine of ‘jabr’ are, (in practice) the proponents of the doctrine of ‘ikhtiyār’, but only they realize it not.”

It is interesting to note that the Noble Qur’ān has repeatedly emphasized this issue too. In verse 39 of Sūratul Nabā it says:

﴿فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَا بَاءً﴾

“So whoever desires may take refuge with his Lord.”

In other verses too great emphasis has been laid upon man’s will, and since mentioning all of them would only serve to prolong the

discussion, we shall content ourselves by presenting only two verses below:

﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴾

“Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.”⁸⁴

﴿ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا ﴾

“So let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve; surely We have prepared for the iniquitous a fire.”⁸⁵

The discussion regarding this issue is a very protracted one with numerous books and articles having been written in this regard. What has been mentioned has just been a superficial glance at the issue from the standpoint of the conscience and the Noble Qur’ān. We continue our discussion by mentioning one important point:

Support for the issue of jabr, on the part of a group of people, did not arise only due to philosophical problems; rather, important psychological and social factors undoubtedly contributed to the birth and continuation of this belief.

Many of those, who have accepted the belief of jabr, predestination or ‘qaḍa and qadr’ (fate and destiny, but with the attribute of compulsion attached to them), have done so in order to escape the burden of responsibilities or to cover up their failures, which have been a consequence of their own shortcomings and negligence, or to provide for themselves a covering for their wild carnal desires (They would state: Allāh ﷻ knew from pre-eternity that we would consume wine; and we consume wine now in order that Allāh’s ﷻ knowledge does not become ignorance!)

At times the colonialist powers, in order to suppress the resistance of the people and put out the flames of anger of the nations, would

⁸⁴ *Sūratul Insān* (76), Verse 3

⁸⁵ *Sūratul Kahf* (18), Verse 29

make themselves dominant over the others by making use of this doctrine. They used to say: ‘Your fate, from the very beginning, had been ordained to be this; where is there any alternative except submission and happiness (over our dominance)?’

By accepting this doctrine all the deeds of the criminals and the sins of the sinners would become justified and there would be no difference between an offender and an obedient person.⁸⁶

The verse:

﴿ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴾

“And your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants”⁸⁷

is a clear proof with regards to the issue of ikhtiyār and freedom of will, and is illustrative of this reality that Allāh ﷻ neither punishes anyone inexplicably nor does He increase the punishment of anyone unwarrantedly. His work is absolute justice; this is so since oppression stems from shortcomings, deficiencies, ignorance, unawareness or carnal desires, and His Holy Essence is free from all of these.

Qur’ān, in its manifest verses, simultaneous to pronouncing the doctrine of jabr - which is a source of dissemination of wickedness, an approval for various kinds of evils, and a tool for the rejection of every kind of obligation and responsibility - as being incorrect, considers each person to be answerable for his own deeds and is of the view that the consequences of every person’s deeds would be directed towards that person himself.

And hence we read in a tradition that one of companions Imām ‘Alī ibne Mūsā al-Riḍā عليه السلام asked:

هَلْ يَجْبُرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ عَلَى الْمَعَاصِي؟

“Does Allāh compel His servants to commit sins?”

⁸⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 26, pg. 64

⁸⁷ *Sūratul Fuṣṣilat* (41), Verse 46

فَقَالَ: بَلْ يُخَيِّرُهُمْ وَ يُمَهِّلُهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتُوبُوا.

Whereupon he ﷺ replied: “No. Rather, he gives them the choice and respites them until they repent.”

The companion persisted:

فَهَلْ يُكَلِّفُ عِبَادَهُ مَا لَا يَطِيقُونَ؟

“Does He place upon them obligations that are beyond their ability to perform?”

The Imām ﷺ said:

كَيْفَ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ وَ هُوَ يَقُولُ: ﴿وَ مَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ﴾

“How can He do such a thing when He Himself has said (in the Qur’ān) ‘And your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants?’”

The Imām ﷺ then adds: My father Mūsā ibne Ja’far عليه السلام narrates from his father Ja’far ibne Muḥammad عليه السلام that: “One, who is of the belief that Allāh compels His servants into committing sins or places upon them obligations that are beyond their ability (to perform), do not eat the meat of the animal slaughtered by such a person, do not accept his testimony, do not offer prayers behind him and do not give him anything from the zakāt! (In short, do not apply the laws of Islam to him).⁸⁸

The above tradition implicitly alludes to this subtle point that the doctrine of jabr originates from the concept of ‘obligation that cannot be performed’; this is because if, on the one hand, man is compelled into committing sins while on the other hand, he is prohibited from it, this becomes a clear case of placing an obligation that cannot to be performed.⁸⁹

In verse 29 of Sūratul Insān, we recite:

⁸⁸ *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, as quoted in *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaḡalāin*, vol. 4, pg. 555

⁸⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 20, pg. 308

﴿إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا﴾

“Surely this is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way.”

And since it was possible that narrow-minded individuals might have interpreted the above expression to mean absolute and unqualified tafwīd (entrusting to Allāh), the next verse goes on to say:

﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ﴾

“And you do not please except that Allāh please.”

And finally says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾

“Surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise.”

And this, in reality, is establishing the well-known belief of:

الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ.

“The (actual) issue is that which lies between the two (extreme) issues of total compulsion and total freedom.”

On the one hand it says: “Allāh ﷻ has shown the way and selecting it is upon you. On the other hand it adds: Your selection is dependent upon the Will of Allāh ﷻ. This means that you do not possess absolute freedom and independence; rather, your strength, power and freedom of will are entirely from Allāh ﷻ and by His Will and permission; the moment He desires, He can take away this strength and freedom from you.”

As such, neither is it tafwīd and unqualified entrusting, nor is it compulsion; rather, it is a subtle reality that lies between these two. In other words it is a kind of freedom, which is related to Allāh’s ﷻ Will such that He can take it away as and when He desires so that the people can carry the burden of responsibility - which is actually

the secret of their achieving perfection - upon their shoulders, while at the same time, not envisage themselves as being independent of Allāh ﷻ.

In short, this expression is for the purpose that the people do not regard themselves as being independent of the guidance, support, grace and blessings of Allāh ﷻ but, during decision-making, entrust themselves to Him and place themselves under His support,.

It thus becomes clear that the reason some of the commentators, who advocate the doctrine of jabr - like Fakhr Rāzī - have adhered to this verse is due to the preconceived views which they had harboured in connection with the issue. Fakhr Rāzī says:

وَأَعْلَمُ إِنَّ هَذِهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ آيَاتِ النَّبِيِّ تَلَاطَمَتْ فِيهَا أَمْوَاجُ الْجَبْرِ وَالْقَدْرِ.

“Do know that this verse is one of the verses which indicate upon ‘jabr’ and predestination!”⁹⁰

Yes, if we were to extricate this verse from the verses previous to it, there would be room for this delusion; however, in view of the fact that in one verse the effect of ikhtiyār has been mentioned while in the other verse the effect of Allāh’s Will, the issue of:

الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ.

is quite plainly established.

Incredibly, the advocates of tafwīḍ cling on to that very verse, which speaks of total freedom of choice whereas the proponents of jabr adhere to that very verse, which speaks only of jabr - each of them wanting to justify their preconceived opinions by means of the respective verses. However, the correct comprehension of Allāh’s ﷻ speech (or any other speech for that matter) demands that all the verses be placed alongside each other and then, without prejudices and prejudgments, the judgment should take place.

It is likely that the last part of the verse which states....

⁹⁰ Commentary of Fakhr Rāzī, vol. 30, pg. 262

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾

“Surely Allāh is Knowing, Wise.”

also alludes to this meaning. This is because the Knowledge and Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ necessitate that the people be left free in journeying the path towards perfection; for if it were not so, the perfection that is imposed would not be perfection at all. Besides, His knowledge and wisdom does not permit Him to compel some into performing good deeds and others into committing evil acts, and later reward the first group and punish the second.⁹¹

16. Is the theory of evolution inconsistent with theism?

The Qur’ān contains a concise discussion in connection with the creation of man which it has presented in a nutshell since its prime aim had been issues that were educative in essence. This topic has been presented in numerous places in the Qur’ān such as Sūratul Sajdah, Sūratul Mu’minūn, Sūrat Ṣād and some other chapters.

However, we do know that the Qur’ān is not a book of natural sciences but rather, a book for human development, and hence it should not be expected that details of these sciences such as issues relating to evolution, anatomy, embryology, botany and the like should be contained within it; nevertheless, it is quite acceptable that in relevance to educative discussions, brief allusions are made to different aspects of these sciences in the Qur’ān.

Having taking this into consideration, there are two discussions which we consider essential to present before you:

1. Evolution of species from the scientific point of view.
2. Evolution of species from the Qur’ānic point of view.

At the outset, we shall pursue the first topic and discuss the issue without reference to the verses and the traditions, only taking into consideration the criteria associated with the natural sciences:

⁹¹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 25, pg. 385

We know that amongst scholars in this field there are two theories that are prevalent in connection with the creation of the living entities, irrespective of whether they are plants or animals:

The theory of evolution, which states that in the beginning, the various living entities did not possess the form that they presently possess, rather, the beginning of entities started with a single cell, which came into being as a result of mutation amid mud and slime, in the depths of the oceans; some non-living entities found themselves in special conditions and from them came into existence the first living cells.

These microscopic entities gradually underwent evolution - changing forms from one species to another, and shifting from the seas to the wild and from there to the air - and in this fashion, various species of plants, land and sea animals, and birds came into existence.

The most perfect and complete link in this process of evolution are the humans of today, who have manifested themselves in this present form - (evolving) initially from entities that resembled the monkeys and then from monkeys that resembled humans.

The theory of constancy of species, which states that every species of animal, from the very onset, manifested separately in the same form that they presently possess and there has occurred no transformation of any species into another. And hence, quite naturally, man too possessed an independent creation and from the very beginning had been created in this form.

Scholars of both the groups have written numerous books trying to establish their viewpoint, and this issue has been a subject of great dispute in scholastic circles.

These battles intensified from the time of Lamarck (the renowned French zoologist, who lived in the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century) and later Darwin - the English

zoologist who, in the 19th century, presented his views in connection with the evolution of species with fresh proofs and arguments.

However, there is no doubt that in circles of natural sciences, most of the scholars today support the theory of evolution.

ARGUMENTS OF THE PROPONENTS OF EVOLUTION

Their arguments can be summarized into three kinds:

The first of their claims is related to paleontology – the study of fossils of erstwhile living animals. They are of the opinion that studies conducted in connection with the various layers of earth reveal that living entities changed their forms from simple to more intricate and perfect forms, and there is only one way to explain these variations in the fossils – and that is the theory of evolution.

Their second argument is a clue which they have collected from comparative anatomy. In the course of lengthy discussions, they state: When the frame-work of various dissected animals are placed for comparison, great resemblances are seen to exist between them, which indicates that all of them have been derived from one origin and source.

And finally, their third argument is based upon a finding that they have procured from embryology. They are of the opinion that if the animals, while they are suntil embryos within the mother or inside the egg and have not seen the necessary development stages, are placed alongside each other, they shall be observed to possess great resemblances amongst themselves. This fact also emphasizes that in the beginning all of them come from one source and origin.

ANSWERS OF THE ADVOCATES OF ‘CONSTANCY OF SPECIES’

However, the supporters of the theory of ‘constancy of species’ state one general answer for all the above statements and that is:

None of the above arguments are convincing. Of course, it cannot be denied the each of the above three claims do justify the probability

of evolution as a conjectural probability, however, they can never induce certainty and conviction within us with respect to this issue.

To put it clearly, proving the theory of evolution and converting it from a mere theory into an indisputable scientific law should either take place by means of rational proof or by means of sense, tests and experiments - there exists no third alternative.

However, on the one hand we do know that there is no room for rational proofs with respect to such issues, while on the other, experimenting in connection with issues, whose roots exist millions of years in the past, is something that is not feasible!

What we perceive by means of sense and experiments is that with the passage of time, as a result of mutation, superficial changes do take place within animals and plants. For example, from one breed of ordinary sheep suddenly a breed of sheep is born whose wool, in terms of softness and delicacy, varies greatly from that of ordinary sheep – this being the origin of a new breed of sheep by the name of merino, possessing these exceptional characteristics in their wool.

Or animals, as a result of mutation, develop a change in the colour of the eyes, nails or the structure of their skin – and other such changes.

However, as yet, no one has ever witnessed a mutation that has caused an important alteration in the essential organs of the body of an animal, or transformed one species into another.

Thus, we can only speculate that successive mutations could, one day, possibly cause a change in the species of animals and, for example, transform a reptile into a bird. Nevertheless, this speculation is not a conclusive supposition but only one conjectural issue. This is because we have never encountered - neither by our sense nor by experiments - mutations that alter the essential organs of the body.

From what has been stated above we conclude that the triple arguments propounded by the advocates of evolution cannot carry

this theory beyond its theoretical concept, and it is for this reason that those who discuss these issues always refer to it as ‘theory’ of evolution of species, and never refer to it as a law or a rule.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AND ‘THEISM’

Many people claim that this theory is inconsistent with theism and God-worship, and probably, from one angle, there might be some truth in what they claim. This is because, with the advent of Darwinism, there commenced an intense battle between the Church on the one hand and the supporters of this theory on the other, and due to political and social reasons a wide-spread propaganda was initiated stating that Darwinism was not consistent with theism.

However, today, it is clear for us that there exists no inconsistency between them, i.e. irrespective of whether we accept the theory of evolution or reject it due to lack of proof, we can still be believers in God.

Even if we assume that the Theory of Evolution of Species is established, all it would do is to take the form of a scientific rule that has manifested for us a natural cause and effect phenomenon – one, which shall be no different from the cause-effect relationship existing in the animal world and between other entities. Are the discoveries of natural causes that lead to rainfall, the tides of the seas, or the earthquakes an impediment in acquiring awareness of God? Surely not! Similarly, the discovery of an evolutionary relationship between the various species does not create any obstacle in the way of developing the cognizance of God.

Only those, who imagined that the discovery of natural causes does not run in harmony with the belief in the existence of God, can state such things. Today, however, we comprehend that not only do the discoveries of these causes not harm monotheism and Unity (of Allāh ﷻ), but instead, they provide us with fresh proofs (related to the system of creation), regarding the existence of God.

Interestingly, Darwin himself, in the face of allegations of heresy, explicitly expresses in his book *On The Origin of Species* that ‘As I accept the (theory of) evolution of species, I also believe in God; fundamentally, justifying and explaining evolution is not possible without (first) acknowledging the existence of God.’

Reflect on this statement: Despite acknowledging the influence of natural causes for the manifestation of various species of animals, he continued to believe in the One God, and gradually, as he grew older, the intensity of a special internal feeling that perceived the presence of a superhuman Power increased to such an extent within him that he realized that the conundrum of creation would remain unfathomable for man.⁹²

Essentially, he was of the opinion that the manner in which the species are guided and led through the strange twists of evolution and the transformation of an extremely simple living entity into all these various and different species of animals, without the existence of a calculated plan, and without the means of a Universal Intelligence, is impossible!

And truly, it is exactly so! Is it possible to bring forth from one single, extremely primitive substance all these strange and mind-boggling derivatives - each of which portray extensive organization - without resorting to a source of infinite Knowledge and Power?

In conclusion: The uproar that the Theory of Evolution is in disagreement with the issue of theism and God-worship is one which is baseless and unsubstantiated (irrespective of whether we accept the Theory of Evolution or not).

The only question that remains to be answered is: Is the theory of Evolution of Species in conflict with the history that the Noble Qur’ān presents in connection with the creation of Ādam ﷺ? The answer to this shall be discussed in the next question.⁹³

⁹² *Darwinism*, written by Maḥmūd Behzād, pg. 75, 76

⁹³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 81

17. Is the theory of evolution of species inconsistent with the viewpoint of the Noble Qur'ān with regards to the creation of Prophet Ādam ﷺ?

Interestingly the supporters of the theory of Evolution of Species, as well as those from amongst the Muslims who oppose it, have sought to adhere to the Qur'ān to prove their stances. However, probably being influenced by their own beliefs, some have sought to base their arguments on verses which do not have a complete bearing on their views. Accordingly, we shall select, from both the sides, only those verses which can be placed under discussion with regards to the issue under consideration.

The most important verse upon which the supporters of evolution lay great stress is verse 33 of Sūrat Āle 'Imrān:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَ نُوحًا وَ آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ آلَ عِمرَانَ عَلَيَّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Surely Allāh chose Ādam and Nūḥ and the descendants of Ibrāhīm and the descendants of 'Imrān above the nations.”

They reason that since Nūḥ ﷺ and the descendants of Ibrāhīm ﷺ and the descendants of 'Imrān ﷺ lived in their ummah and were chosen from amongst them, therefore the case of Ādam ﷺ too ought to be similar. That is, during his period, humans – who have been referred to as the nations – must have necessarily existed and Ādam ﷺ had been chosen by Allāh from amongst them. And this reveals that Ādam ﷺ was not the first human on the earth but rather, there had been humans before him; the distinction of Ādam ﷺ over the other humans was his superior intellect and spirituality, and this was the factor that resulted in his selection from amongst the individuals, similar to him.

These supporters have also mentioned numerous other verses, some of which have no relation whatsoever with the issue of evolution such that interpreting them to mean this would be interpreting the

Qur’ān by personal opinion, while other verses are such that they can be considered to be consistent with the theory of evolution as well as with the independent creation of Ādam ﷺ. Hence, we have decided against mentioning them here.

As for the objection against this argument, it can be stated that if the term العالمين (nations) in the verse is in the meaning of ‘contemporary people’ and اصطفاء (to choose) means that the selection must have necessarily taken place from similar individuals, then this argument could be accepted. However if one were to say that العالمين includes individuals, who are contemporary and those who are not, just as has been reported in the well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, in connection with the excellence of Haḍrat Fāṭimah ؑ, wherein he says:

أَمَّا ابْنَتِي فَاطِمَةُ فَإِنَّهَا سَيِّدَةُ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ.

“As for my daughter Fāṭimah, she is the chief of the ladies of the world, from the first to the last.”

Then, in such a case, their argument on the basis of the above verse would be inappropriate. This is because it would be exactly as if one says: Allāh ﷻ had chosen a group of people from amongst the humans (humans of all eras and epochs), one of whom is Ādam ﷺ. In such a case, there is no need for humans to have existed during the time of Ādam ﷺ such that the term العالمين becomes applicable to them or that Ādam ﷺ is chosen from amongst them. This is especially so when the choosing was being done by Allāh ﷻ, Who had been fully cognizant of the future and of all the generations that were to come.⁹⁴

However, more importantly, the verses which the proponents of ‘constancy of species’ have selected as proof from the Qur’ān are those that say:

⁹⁴ Another possibility is that within a short time, the children of Ādam ﷺ constituted a small society and Ādam ﷺ was the chosen one from amongst them.

Allāh ﷻ has created man from dry clay, which had been taken from dark-coloured and stinking mud. Interestingly, this expression has been utilized in connection with the creation of ‘insān’...

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ﴾

“And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned in shape.”⁹⁵

as well as for ‘bashar’...

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ﴾

“And when your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape.”⁹⁶

And later, also for Ādam ﷺ - this being inferred contextually from the mention of the prostration of the angels (Note the verses 29, 30 and 31 of Sūratul Hījr.)

At first glance, the apparent meaning of the verse appears to be that initially Ādam ﷺ was created out of black mud and then, when his form was completed, the divine soul was blown into it subsequent to which the angels fell down in prostration before him, except Iblīs.

The style of speech indicates that between the creation of Ādam ﷺ from mud and the emergence of the present form no other species existed.

The term ‘نم’, appearing in some of the verses and used in the ‘Arabic language to denote ‘a sequence with intervening time intervals’, can never be taken as evidence to claim the passage of millions of years and the existence of thousands of species; rather, it could quite possibly allude to the intervals that existed between the

⁹⁵ Sūratul Hījr (15), Verse 26

⁹⁶ Ibid., Verse 28

various stages of Ādam's ﷺ creation – from mud and then from dry clay and then the blowing of the divine soul.

And it is for this reason that this very term 'ثم' has been employed in connection with the creation of man in the embryonic world and the stages of his development within it. The Noble Qur'ān says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَ
نُقَرِّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ
لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ﴾

“O’ people! if you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust, then from a small seed, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete, that We may make clear to you; and We cause what We please to stay in the wombs until an appointed time, then We bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain your maturity.”⁹⁷

You observe that there is no necessity for 'ثم' to indicate upon a lengthy interval; rather, just as it is employed for protracted intervals, it can also be utilized for short intervals too.

From what we have mentioned above, we infer that although the verses of the Qur'ān do not directly mention the issue of evolution or 'constancy of species', nevertheless, the apparent meanings of the verses is more in accordance with the concept of independent creation (of course, this is as far as the creation of man is concerned). Despite not being entirely explicit, the apparent meanings of the verses dealing with the creation of Ādam ﷺ mostly tend to revolve around the concept of independent creation;

⁹⁷ *Sūratul Ḥajj* (22), Verse 5

but with regards to the other living beings, the Noble Qur'ān remains silent.⁹⁸

18. What is the reality of dreams?

It is necessary that we discuss, in a concise manner, the various opinions that have been propounded in connection with this subject:

There have been numerous interpretations about the reality of the dreams which can be categorized into two categories:

1. Materialistic Interpretation

2. Spiritual Interpretation

The materialists say there could be several causes of dreams:

It is possible that dreams are a direct consequence of the daily acts of man; i.e. whatever has transpired with man over past days becomes embodied for him in his thoughts, whilst he sleeps.

Possibly, a series of unfulfilled desires become a reason for witnessing dreams - a thirsty person observes water in his dreams, and a person awaiting someone, who has gone on a journey, dreams that he has arrived. (From ancient times, it has been said that a camel witnesses cottonseed in its dreams!)

It is likely that fear of something causes man to dream about it; it has been repeatedly observed that those who possess fear of thieves witness them in their dreams.

Freud and the followers of his ideology have presented another material explanation for dreams:

In the course of a detailed introduction they define dreams as being the gratification of repressed tendencies which, with alterations, creep into the arena of self-consciousness, to deceive the "I" within man.

⁹⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 86

Explanation: After accepting the fact that the human mind is comprised of two parts: The self-conscious part (that, which is associated with the day-to-day thoughts, voluntary knowledge and the freedom of choice of man) and the sub-conscious part (that, which is concealed within the inner-self as an unfulfilled tendency and inclination), they go on to state: It frequently happens that in the state of sleep, when the ‘self-conscious’ apparatus has shut down, the inclinations and tendencies which we have been unable to gratify due to certain reasons and which have accumulated in our inner-self turn to the sub-conscious in order to achieve a kind of fictitious and imaginary gratification. At times this is reflected without any change (like an aficionado, who witnesses his beloved, whom he has lost, in his dreams), while at other times there occurs a change in form which is reflected in appropriate appearances, in which case there arises the need for interpretation (of the dreams).

Accordingly, dreams are always associated with the past and never informative of the future. It can only be a useful for reading the unconscious self, and it is for this reason that the dreams of patients are utilized for the treatment of psychological disorders that rely on exposing the unconscious mind.

Some of the experts of the field of nutrition believe that there exists a relationship between ‘dreams’ and ‘the nutritional need of the body’, and are of the opinion that if, for example, a person happens to witness blood trickling from his gums in his dreams, it means that the quantity of ascorbic acid in his body has diminished! And if he dreams that his hair have turned white, it can be inferred that he suffers from an inadequacy of vitamin B!!

However, spiritual philosophers offer a different explanation for the occurrence of dreams. They state that dreams are of several kinds:

Dreams that are related to the by-gones, inclinations and desires - and these constitute a major portion of man’s dreams.

Dreams that are distressing and incoherent; these are an outcome of delusion and imagination (although it is possible that they could possess psychological reasons)

Dreams that are related to the future and provide information in connection with it.

Undoubtedly, dreams that are related to the past and the embodiment of the scenarios that man has seen in the course of his life do not possess any particular interpretation. Similarly, distressing dreams - technically referred to as *أَضْعَاتُ أَحْلَامٍ* - which are an outcome of disturbing thoughts and are similar to the thoughts that manifest themselves for man in the state of delirium, too cannot possess any particular interpretation in connection with the future issues of life. However, psychologists and psychoanalysts utilize them and consider them to be a door for the comprehension of the human unconscious self and a key for the treatment of psychological disorders. As such, interpretation of these dreams is used for the purpose of uncovering the mysteries of the mind and the origins of diseases, and not for revealing future happenings of life.

As for the dreams that are related to the future, they too are of two kinds: One kind consisting of dreams that are plain, clear and explicit, and which do not require any interpretation whatsoever; and amazingly enough, at times, materializing exactly as witnessed either in the near or distant future - without the slightest of differences.

The second kind are those dreams which prophesize future events but, due to the influence of certain mental and spiritual factors, have undergone a change of form and hence need to be interpreted.

There are so many instances for each of these dreams that the existence of all of them cannot be denied. Not only have they been mentioned in religious sources and books of history, but these have also been noticed in our own lives and the lives of those who are

known to us, in a measure that prevents us from considering them to be mere coincidence.⁹⁹

19. What is meant by ‘The Courses’ (Sunnat) of Allāh’?

In verse 62 of Sūratul Aḥzāb, the Qur’ān mentions that one of the unchanging ‘courses of Allāh’ is ‘exterminating the conspirators (against Islam) by means of one general attack - the like of which have been observed in the former nations too’.

Similar expressions have also appeared on other occasions in the Qur’ān:

In verse 38 of Sūratul Aḥzāb, the Noble Qur’ān, after issuing the permission to break the incorrect pagan custom, which prohibited a person from marrying the divorced wife of his adopted son, says:

﴿سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا﴾

“Such has been the course of Allāh with respect to those who have gone before; and the command of Allāh is a decree that is made absolute.”

In verse 43 of Sūratul Fāṭir, after threatening the sinning nations with perdition, the Noble Qur’ān says:

﴿فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّةَ الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا﴾

“Then should they wait for aught except the way of the former people? For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allāh; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allāh.”

In Sūratul Ghāfir, verse 85, after asserting that bringing faith after witnessing the annihilating chastisement descending upon them was not at all helpful for the obstinate disbelievers of the past nations, the Qur’ān adds:

⁹⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 9, pg. 312

﴿سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen Our punishment; (this is) Allāh’s law, which has indeed obtained in the matter of His servants, and there the unbelievers are lost.”

In verse 23 of Sūratul Faḥ, after speaking about the victory for the believers, defeat for the disbelievers and non-existence of any protector or helper for them in the battles, it adds:

﴿سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا﴾

“Such has been the course of Allāh that has indeed run before, and you shall not find a change in Allāh’s course.”

And again in verse 77 of Sūratul Isrā’, when speaking of the conspiracy to either banish or kill the Noble Prophet ﷺ, it adds:

﴿سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا وَ لَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا﴾

“(This is Our) course with regard to those of Our messengers whom We sent before you, and you shall not find a change in Our course.”

From all these verses, it can be clearly inferred that (سنن or سنة) course(s), in these instances, refer to the fundamental laws related to creation and legislation which are never subject to any alteration. In other words, in the world of divine creation and legislation, Allāh ﷻ has ordained certain principles which, similar to the constitutions prevailing amongst the people of the world, cannot become victims of distortion and alteration. These rules had prevailed over the past nations and shall continue to do so over the present and future ones.

Assistance to the prophets, defeat of the disbelievers, the compulsion to act in compliance with the Divine commands howsoever displeasing they may appear to a society, futility of

repentance at the time of descent of Divine chastisement and the like are some examples of these eternal courses.¹⁰⁰

20. Does ‘injury by an evil eye’ possess any reality?

In verse 51 of Sūratul Qalam, we read:

﴿وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُزِلُّوكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ...﴾

“And those who disbelieve would almost smite you with their eyes when they hear the reminder...”

In view of the above verse the question that arises is: Does injury by means of an evil eye possess any reality?

Many people are of the belief that some kinds of eyes possess a peculiar influence such that if they happen to look at something in wonder, they destroy it or break it, and if they happen to look at a person, they can make him sick or (even) insane.

According to the intellect, this is not something which is impossible. Many of today’s scientists believe that concealed in some eyes lies a special magnetic force which possesses great utility, such that it can even be developed by means of training and exercise; the magnetic sleep is induced by means of this very magnetic force of the eyes.

In a world wherein x-rays are able to perform tasks, the like of which even the most destructive of weapons are unable to perform, acknowledging the presence of a force in certain eyes that is capable of influencing someone by means of some special waves should not appear to be fantastic.

It has been widely reported that people have personally witnessed individuals, possessing this mysterious power of the eyes, to have incapacitated humans, animals and things by injuring them by means of ‘evil eye’.

¹⁰⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 17, pg. 434

Thus, not only should one not insist on rejecting such issues but instead acknowledge the possibility of their occurrence - scientifically and intellectually.

In the Islamic traditions too, various expressions meet the eye which, to a certain extent, corroborate the existence of such an issue.

In a tradition we read that Asmā Bint `Umays once said to the Noble Prophet ﷺ: “At times, some people inflict injury to the children of Ja’far by means of ‘evil eyes’. Should I procure a charm for them?” (Charm means prayers, which people keep in their possessions to protect themselves from ‘evil eyes’; this is also referred to as ta’wīdh).

The Noble Prophet ﷺ replied:

لَوْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ يَسْبِقُ الْقَدْرَ لَسَبَقَهُ الْعَيْنُ.

“Yes (there is no harm in it). Had there been something that could have superseded Divine fate and destiny, it should have been ‘evil eye!’”¹⁰¹

In another tradition it has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ said: The Noble Prophet ﷺ secured a charm for Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn ؑ and recited the following supplication:

أُعِيذُكُمْ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّةِ وَ أَسْمَائِهِ الْحُسْنَى كُلِّهَا عَامَّةً مِنْ شَرِّ السَّامَّةِ وَالْهَامَّةِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَامَّةٍ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ.

“I place you in the refuge of all of the Perfect Words and the Best Names of Allāh from death, harmful animals, evil eye and from the evil of the envious when he envies.”

Then turning to us, he ﷺ said: “Likewise Prophet Ibrāhīm did the charm for Ismā’īl and Ishāq.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *Majma’ul Bayān*, vol. 10, pg. 341

¹⁰² *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaḳalāin*, vol. 5, pg. 400

In Nahjul Balāghah we read:

الْعَيْنُ حَقٌّ وَالرُّقْيَى حَقٌّ.

“Injury by the evil eye is true and resorting to prayers to ward away its evils is true too.”^{103 and 104}

21. Does ‘good omen’ and ‘evil omen’ possess any reality?

Perhaps the concept of good and evil omens have always prevailed amongst men and nations, all through the ages; they interpreted certain things as auguring good for themselves and considered them to be an indication for their victory and progress, and interpreted some others as portending evil for themselves, looking upon them as a sign for their defeat, failure and lack of success. This belief was held when there existed no logical relation whatsoever between these things and victory and defeat; especially so in the case of ‘evil omen’, which was and is superstitious in essence.

Although these two do not possess any natural effect and influence, nevertheless they can undoubtedly possess a psychological bearing. Predominantly, a good omen induces hope and activity while an evil omen results in despondency, hopelessness and weakness.

It is probably for this reason that whereas auguring good has not been prohibited in the Islamic sources, auguring evil has been intensely criticised. A well-known tradition of the Noble Prophet ﷺ states:

تَفَاءَلُوا بِالْخَيْرِ تَجِدُوهُ.

“Regard things as being good omens (and be hopeful) in order that you achieve it.”

¹⁰³ *Nahjul Balāgha*, Short Sayings 400. This tradition has also been narrated as: العين حق in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 7, pg. 171 in the chapter العين حق. In the book *al-Muʿjam al-Mufaḥhras Li-alfādh al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, (vol. 4, pg. 451) this same meaning has been reported from various sources.

¹⁰⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 24, pg. 426

The positive aspect of this issue is also observed in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Imāms ؑ who, at times, interpreted events as possessing a good omen. For example, during the encounter of the Muslims with the disbelievers of Mecca in Ḥudaibiyah, we read that when Suhail ibne ‘Amr, in his capacity as the representative of the disbelievers of Mecca, desired to meet the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he was informed of his name, he said (to his companions):

قَدْ سَهَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرَكُمْ.

“(I interpret the name Suhail to be a good omen and that) this meeting shall go easy upon you.”¹⁰⁵

A celebrated scholar and writer of the 8th century AH alludes to this point in one of his works when he says: “The Noble Prophet ﷺ approved of a good augury because whenever man is hopeful of Allāh’s favours, he ventures on the path of good whereas when he severs his hope from Allāh, he shall venture out on the path of evil. Presaging evil results in misgivings and causes one to await misfortunes and endure misery.”¹⁰⁶

As far as the evil omen, which the Arabs refer to as ‘ṭatayyur’ and ‘ṭiyārah’, is concerned, the Islamic traditions strongly criticize it; the Qur’ān too has repeatedly censured it.¹⁰⁷ In a tradition we read that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ.

“Auguring evil (and considering the evil omen to have an influence upon the life of man) is a kind of polytheism (shirk).”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Tafsīrul Mizān*, vol. 19, pg. 86

¹⁰⁶ *Safīnatul Biḥār*, vol. 2, pg. 102

¹⁰⁷ Like verse 19 of *Sūrat Yāsīn*, verse 47 of *Sūratul Naml* and verse 131 of *Sūratul A’rāf*.

¹⁰⁸ *Tafsīrul Mizān*, while interpreting the verse presently under discussion.

We also read that the only influence that an evil omen possesses is the psychological one. Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام has said: “An evil omen affects only in the measure you consider it to possess. If you take it lightly, its influence would be trivial, but if you regard it seriously, it would affect you immensely and if you totally disregard it, it would have no effect.”¹⁰⁹

It has been reported in traditions from the Noble Prophet ﷺ that the way to combat evil auguries is to disregard them. It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said: “There are three things from which none can remain safe (and its whisperings are found within the hearts of most men): auguring evil, envy and mistrust.”

He ﷺ was asked: “What then should we do?”

He replied: “When you augur evil, ignore it and go your way; when envy manifests itself in your heart, refrain from doing anything in accordance with it, in practice; and when you experience mistrust, disregard it.”

Strangely, the issue of good and evil omen had existed and until exists in industrially developed countries and amidst intellectuals and even amongst celebrated geniuses. Passing beneath a ladder, falling of a saltcellar and gifting someone a knife are gravely looked upon as evil omens by those living in the West.

Of course, the existence of good omens, just as we had previously mentioned, is not an important issue – it mainly possesses a positive impact and influence. However, the factors of evil auguries must be opposed, fought and expelled from the minds, and the best way for this is by strengthening the spirit of tawakkul (relying on Allāh ﷻ) and trust in Allāh ﷻ within the hearts, as has been stated in Islamic traditions.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 6, pg. 317

22. Is qīṣāṣ (the law of retaliation) against the norms of intellect and human sentiments?

There are a group of people who, without reflection, have sought to criticize some of the penal issues of Islam - especially the issue of 'qīṣāṣ' (law of retaliation) with respect to which they have raised great commotion, saying:

The crime perpetrated by a killer is nothing more than taking the life of a person, but you, by means of qīṣāṣ, are repeating the same act!

Qīṣāṣ is just plain vengefulness and brutality. This repugnant attribute needs to be uprooted from amidst the people by means of correct education; however, the supporters of qīṣāṣ breathe fresh life into this abhorrent attribute every day!

Murder is not a crime that takes place at the hands of sound individuals; surely the murderer suffers from some psychological disorder and ought to be treated, and qīṣāṣ cannot be a remedy for such sick individuals.

Issues that are related to social order need to develop in step with the society; hence, laws that used to be implemented fourteen hundred years ago should not be implemented in today's society!

Is it not better that instead of qīṣāṣ the killers are placed in prisons, compelled to work and utilized for the benefit of the society. In this way, not only would the society remain protected from their evils but simultaneously, they could be utilized to the maximum extent possible.

These are summarized versions of the objections that are propounded in connection with the issue of qīṣāṣ.

A close study of the verses of qīṣāṣ in the Qur'ān would make manifest the answers to these objections.

﴿ وَ لَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

“And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves.”¹¹¹

This is because, at times, elimination of dangerous individuals is the best option for the development of a society and since *qīṣāṣ* safeguards life, it is perhaps for this reason that it has been placed as an instinct within man.

Be it the medical system, agriculture industry or animal husbandry, etc... each and every thing is based upon this rational principle – elimination of a dangerous and troublesome entity. We observe that for the purpose of protecting the body, the diseased part of the body is amputated; or for ensuring the growth of a plant, harmful and inconveniencing branches are sawed away. Those, who regard the killing of the murderer as being a loss of another individual, only visualize it from an individual perspective; however if they were to take the welfare of the entire society into consideration and were to know what role the implementation of *qīṣāṣ* plays in safeguarding and educating all the other individuals, they would surely review their words. Eliminating such blood-shedding individuals from the society is akin to severing a harmful limb or a branch, which, as per the ruling of reason, must necessarily be severed. And indeed, it must be realized that until today, no one has ever objected to the amputation of a diseased limb or detrimental branch. This was in connection with the first objection.

With respect to the second objection, it must be realized that fundamentally, the legislation of *qīṣāṣ* is in no way related to the issue of vengefulness. This is because vengeance means smothering the flames of anger arising due to a personal issue. On the other hand, *qīṣāṣ* has been decreed for preventing a repetition of oppression within the society and with the objective of seeking seek justice for the other innocent individuals of it.

¹¹¹ *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 179

As for the third objection that the killer must necessarily be suffering from a psychological disorder and that it is not possible for such a crime to be perpetrated on the part of normal individuals, it must be said that this speech is true in certain instances and Islam too, in such instances, has not imposed the ruling of qīṣāṣ for an insane killer or the like. However, the sickness of the killer cannot be provided as an excuse since the evils that this would unleash and the audacity that it would impart to offenders is evident for one and all. And if this argument is true in the case of killers, it should also be true for all the criminals, offenders and those who violate the rights of others. This is because a person possessing a complete soundness of intellect shall never encroach upon the rights of others. Accordingly, all penal laws should be annulled and all offenders should be dispatched to hospitals housing psychologically-diseased patients instead of prisons.

The fourth objection stated that the development of society does not accept the law of qīṣāṣ, for qīṣāṣ could only play a role in the ancient societies. Accordingly today, qīṣāṣ being regarded as a ruling contrary to conscience must be deleted. The answer lies in this one sentence:

The above claim, taking into account the widespread nature of offences in today's world and the statistics of casualties of the battle-fields and other locations, is one which is worthless and merely a flight of the imagination. And upon the assumption that such a world does come into existence, Islam has never presented qīṣāṣ to be the one and only way but has also placed the ruling of pardon alongside it. Undoubtedly, in that assumed environment, the people might themselves prefer granting pardon to the killer - however, in today's world, wherein offences in various forms are surely more numerous and barbaric than those in the past, deletion of this law would not achieve anything except an increase in the offences.

With respect to the fifth objection it must be comprehended that the aim of *qiṣāṣ*, as explicitly expressed by the Qur'ān, is to safeguard the general life of the society and prevent the repetition of crime. Certainly, prisons do not possess a noticeable influence (especially today's prisons, which are better than the houses of many of the offenders). It is due to this that in countries where capital punishment had been annulled, in a short time, the crime and murder figures had skyrocketed. This is particularly so if the sentence of imprisonment, as is usual, can be graced with pardon, for in such a case criminals would perpetuate criminal violations with a greater peace of mind and tranquillity of thought.¹¹²

23. Is the punishment of amputation of the hands, rough and violent?

Before answering this question it is essential to mention the conditions which govern the punishment of amputation of a thief's hand.

From the entire collection of Islamic traditions, it can be inferred that there are numerous requirements, which have to be fulfilled, in order that this Islamic punishment is put into execution, and failing which, initiating this punishment is not permissible. Some of these requirements are as follows:

The item that is stolen should possess a value of at least one-fourth of a dinar.¹¹³

It should have been stolen from a secured place such as a house, a shop, internal pockets etc.

The theft should not have taken place during famines and droughts, when the people are suffering from hunger and possess no means.

¹¹² *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 607

¹¹³ One dinār is equal to one legal *mithqāl* of coined gold, and one legal *mithqāl* is equivalent to 18 barley grains. Thus, one legal *mithqāl* is equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ ordinary *mithqāl*.

The thief should be sane and an adult, and should have committed the act out of his own choice and free will.

This ruling shall not be applicable in the case of a father, who steals from the property of his son, or a partner, who does so from the property of the partnership.

Stealing fruits from the trees of a garden has also been exempted from this ruling.

Every instance, in which there exists a likelihood of error on the part of the thief that he may have mistaken other's property as his own, is exempted this ruling.

In addition to the above, there are some other conditions, which have been mentioned and explained in books of jurisprudence.

The above should not be mistaken to mean that theft is prohibited and unlawful only when all the above conditions gather together; in Islam, theft in every form, in every measure and in every way is prohibited and unlawful. What is meant by the above conditions is that only under such circumstances can this penalty be put into execution.

The measure in which the hand should be amputated

It is popular amongst our jurists that on the basis of the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام only the four fingers of the right hand must be amputation and not more - unlike the Sunnite jurists, who have stipulated more than this.

Is this Islamic penalty rough and violent?

Very often the opponents of Islam and even some of the less knowledgeable Muslims have levelled this objection that this Islamic penalty appears to be intensely harsh, and if this ruling were to be implemented in today's world, there would be numerous hands which would have to be cut. In addition, enforcement of this ruling would entail that a person, in addition to losing an important part of his body, would become infamous and notorious all throughout his life.

In answering this objection, attention ought to be paid to this reality that:

Firstly: Just as we had mentioned in the conditions of this ruling that not every thief shall become encompassed by this law, rather, there shall be only one group of dangerous thieves, who shall be formally subjected to this punishment.

Secondly: In view of the fact that in Islam there are several requirements and conditions that need to be met in order to prove a crime, the occurrence of this punishment further diminishes.

Thirdly: Many of the objections which people, possessing less knowledge, have propounded against the Islamic laws is simply because they have sought to examine its one ruling, independently and without taking into account its other rulings; in other words, they attempt to envisage that ruling in a completely non-Islamic society. But if we were to take into consideration the fact that Islam is not just one ruling but a collection of rulings, which when implemented in a society results in enforcement of social justice, fight against poverty, correct education and training, awakening, awareness and piety, then it would become manifest that very few people would become eligible for this punishment. However, it should not be mistaken to mean that in today's societies this ruling should not be enforced; rather, it means that all these aspects and dimensions ought to be taken into consideration at the time of judgement.

In short, an Islamic government is duty-bound to fulfill the basic needs of all the individuals of the country, impart to them the necessary education and also train them with respect to ethics and morals; it is self-evident that in such an environment, offenders shall be few and far in between.

Fourthly: If we observe theft to be rampant today, it is because such rulings are not being enforced; and hence, in environments in which this Islamic ruling is enforced (like Saudi Arabia, in which until very recently this ruling had been in force), extraordinary

safety is observed to prevail over them with regards money and property. Numerous pilgrims to the House of Allāh have personally witnessed purses and wallets containing money lying on the roads and in the streets with none possessing the courage to touch them until such a time that the functionaries of the Department of Collection of Lost Items carry them to the mentioned department from where the owners retrieve their lost items by presenting the necessary identifications. Most of the shops are not locked at night but despite this, no one attempts to break into them.

Interestingly, this Islamic ruling - despite being in force for centuries and under whose shade the Muslims in the initial stages of Islam lived in peace, security and comfort - has only been implemented upon a very few number.

Is the amputation of a few criminal hands an extravagant price to pay for the several-century security of a nation?

Some people object: Is the execution of this penalty with respect to a thief for the sake of a quarter of a dinar not in contradiction with Islam's immense respect for the life of the Muslims and the importance attached by it for protecting them from all harms? This is especially so in view of the fact that the atonement money, stipulated by Islam, for cutting four fingers of a person is an amount, which is excessive and extravagant.

Incidentally, this same question, as reported in some of the books of history, had been put to the distinguished scholar 'Alam al-Hudā - the late Sayyid Murtaḍā - a thousand years ago. The questioner presented his query in the form of a couplet, which is as follows:

يَدٌ بِخَمْسِ مِئِينَ عَسَجِدٍ وَوَدَيْتٍ مَا بِأَلْهَا قُطِعَتْ فِي رُبْعِ دِينَارٍ؟

“The hand, whose atonement is five hundred dinars; why should it be amputated for a quarter of a dinar?”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Of course, it must be noted that five hundred dinārs is in the event that five fingers are cut. However, as we have previously mentioned, according to the Shī'a faith, only four fingers are to be cut for theft.

Sayyid Murtaḍā, in reply, recited this couplet:

عِزُّ الْإِمَامَةِ أَغْلَاهَا وَ أَرْخَصَهَا ذُلُّ الْخِيَانَةِ فَافْهَمْ حِكْمَةَ الْبَارِي

“The honour of trustworthiness made it high-priced, while the abjectness of treachery lowered its value, so comprehend the wisdom of Allāh.”^{115 and 116}

24. Were all the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ upright and righteous?

Some of the Sunni brothers, due to the respect and importance attached to the ‘first of the Muhājirs (Emigrants)’ by the Noble Qur’ān, have sought to infer that they had not committed any wrongdoing until the end of their lives and so, without exception, all of them ought to be looked upon with great esteem. They then generalized this issue to include all the ‘companions’ because of Qur’ān’s praise for them in connection with the ‘pledge of Riḍwān’ and other events. In practice, without taking into regard the deeds of the companions, they considered all of them to be exceptional humans and refused themselves the permission to indulge in any kind of examination and criticism with respect to their deeds.

One of them, the celebrated commentator and the author of al-Manār, has vociferously attacked the Shī’ites as to why they single out some of the initial Muhājirs for criticism... little realizing the great inconsistency of such beliefs with the spirit of Islam and its history?

Undoubtedly, the companions, especially the initial Muhājirs, possess a special reverence; however, this would only have been until so long as they had continued to tread the correct path and exhibit devotion (towards Islam), but from the day some of the companions deviated from the true path of Islam, the Noble Qur’ān would surely view them differently.

¹¹⁵ This incident has been mentioned in vol. 6, pg. 134 of *Tafsīr Alusi*, however, it has been attributed to Alam al-Dīn al-Sakhāvi instead of ‘Alam al-Hudā.

¹¹⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 4, pg. 376

For example, how can we ever exonerate Ṭalḥah and Zubayr for reneging the pledge and opposing the leader – one, who, apart from the explicit statements of the Noble Prophet ﷺ attesting his leadership, had been elected by all the Muslims, including themselves? How can we clear them of the deaths of seventeen thousand Muslims, whose blood had been spilled during the Battle of the Camel? If a person were to shed the blood of one innocent person, he would have no excuse to present before Allāh, what then to speak of this large multitude!

Basically, is it possible to conceive that ‘Alī ؑ and his companions, as well as Ṭalḥah, Zubayr and some others of the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ who had teamed up with them, were both on the side of truth in the Battle of the Camel?

Does any logic and intellect accept this manifest contrast? Can we, in the name of ‘inviolability of the companions’ close our eyes, regard them as special personalities and shove the entire history of Islam after the departure of the Noble Prophet ﷺ into oblivion? And should we flout the Islamic criterion of:

﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَقَاكُمْ﴾

“Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you.”

What kind of irrational and illogical judgement is this?

Basically, does there arise any problem if, one day, a person or persons were to stand in the ranks of the inmates of Paradise and supporters of truth, while on another day in the ranks of the inmates of Hell and opponents of truth? Are all the people infallibles? Have we ourselves not witnessed all these transformations taking place within individuals?

The story of the People of Apostasy - a group of Muslims who had turned apostates after the departure of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - has been narrated by the Sunnites, as well as the Shī'ites in their books,

that the first Caliph initiated a military expedition against them and suppressed their uprising. Had the People of Apostasy not witnessed the Noble Prophet ﷺ and were they not his companions?

More amazing is the fact that in order to escape from this strange inconsistency some have brought in the pretext of ijtihād (independent reasoning) and state that individuals such as Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, Muā'wiyah and their supporters had been mujtahids (religious jurists) and although they had erred in their ijtihād, they had not perpetrated any sin; on the contrary, for these very acts of theirs they shall receive their rewards from Allāh!!

Honestly, what a disgraceful logic! Is rebelling against the successor of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, breaking the pledge and shedding the blood of thousands of innocent people - and that too for the purpose of power, rank and wealth - so complex an issue that one is unable to perceive its evils? Does shedding that great measure of innocent blood entitle one to receive rewards from Allāh ﷻ?

If we were to exonerate a group of companions, who had perpetrated offences in such a manner, without any doubt not a single offender would remain in this world, for we would have acquitted all criminals by this logic. Such unstructured defence of the companions would cause Islam to be viewed with great cynicism.

Consequently there lies no alternative except to look upon everyone - especially the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - with reverence and esteem, however only for so long as they do not deviate from the path of truth, justice and the agenda of Islam!¹¹⁷

Numerous Sunni commentators have reported this tradition from Ḥamīd ibne Ziyād, who says: I approached Muḥammad ibne Ka'b al-Quraḍī and said to him: What do you have to say in connection with the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ? He replied:

¹¹⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 7, pg. 263

بِمَجْمَعِ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مُحْسِنُهُمْ وَ مُسِيئُهُمْ.

“All the companions are the inmates of Paradise - the righteous ones as well as the evil ones!”

I said to him: From where do you state such a thing? Whereupon he recited the following verse:

﴿وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ﴾

“And (as for) the foremost, the first of the Muhajirs and the Ansars, and those who followed them in goodness, Allāh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him.”¹¹⁸

And then continued: With respect to the ‘Followers’ there is a condition that they ought to have followed only the righteous deeds of the companions (only in this case would they attain deliverance, but this is not a condition for the companions to attain deliverance).¹¹⁹

However, this claim is unacceptable for several reasons:

The ruling mentioned in the above verse should also be applicable in the case of the ‘followers’, who, as we had alluded previously, are those, who follow in the footsteps of the initial Muhājirs (Emigrants) and Anṣār (Helpers). Therefore, the entire ummah, without exception, should be of the delivered ones!

As for the fact that in the tradition of Muḥammad ibne Ka’b it has been said that Allāh ﷻ has placed a condition of good deeds with regards to the ‘followers’ i.e. they should only follow the righteous deeds and conduct of the companions, and not their sins, this is an amazing statement.

¹¹⁸ *Sūratul Tawbah* (9), Verse 100

¹¹⁹ *Tafsīrul Manār* and the commentary of Fakhr Rāzī, while discussing the above verse.

This is because if the condition prescribed for the followers in order to attain deliverance is to follow the righteous deeds of the companions, then it is all the more necessary for this condition to be prescribed for the companions too.

In other words Allāh ﷻ, in the above verse, says that His pleasure and happiness shall encompass all the initial Muhājirs and Anṣār, who were righteous and treaded the correct path, and all those who follow them. The verse does not say that He desires to encompass the Muhājirs and Anṣār with His happiness, irrespective of whether they are good or bad, but as for the ‘followers’, He shall accept them only on the basis of that specific condition.

Reason and intellect totally reject this issue; this is because reason does not consider the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ to possess any distinction over the others in this regard. Where lies the difference between the Abū Jahls and those, who initially embraced Islam but later deviated from it?

And why should those, who came into this world years and centuries after the Noble Prophet ﷺ and whose sacrifices and heroisms were no less than those of the early companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, not be eligible for this Divine mercy? Especially since they possessed this distinction that despite not witnessing the Noble Prophet ﷺ, they had accepted him and had brought faith upon him.

How can the Qur’ān, which says: Surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one who is the most righteous amongst you, ever approve of such irrational discrimination? How can the Qur’ān, which in its various verses, curses the sinners and unjust ones, and regards them as deserving of Allāh’s chastisement, approve of this irrational safety of the companions with respect to Divine punishment? Can there be exceptions to these threats and curses of the Qur’ān such that a particular group is kept exempted? Why and for what reason?

Apart from these, can such a ruling not be regarded as showing a green light to them to perpetrate any and every kind of sin and offence?

This ruling does not conform with the history of Islam at all, for there have been numerous individuals who once had stood in the ranks of Muhājirs and Anṣār, only to later deviate from their paths and find themselves incurring the anger of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and consequently the wrath of Allāh. Have we not heard of how Tha'labah ibne Hātib Anṣārī deviated and became the object of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ anger?

To state this more clearly, if what they have intended is that the companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ did not commit any sins, and were pure and infallible from every kind of disobedience and transgression, this is tantamount to rejecting the most obvious and self-evident issues.

And if they meant that the companions did commit offences, but despite this Allāh is pleased with them, this claim would mean that Allāh has been pleased with sins!

Who is it that can absolve and acquit Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, who initially had been of the special companions of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and 'Āishah, his wife, of the death of seventeen thousand Muslims in the Battle of the Camel? Was Allāh ﷻ pleased with these killings and blood-shed?

Would opposition to 'Alī ؑ, the representative of the Noble Prophet ﷺ - who, even assuming that he had not been appointed as the Caliph by the Noble Prophet ﷺ, at the very least, had been chosen by the consensus of the ummah - and battling him and his loyal companions be acts that would obtain the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ?

The truth is that the advocates of the notion of inviolability of the companions, by their insistence and emphasis for the issue, have disfigured the pure face of Islam, which has always considered faith

and righteous deeds to be the measure for gauging a person's character.

And finally, the pleasure and happiness of Allāh ﷻ that has been mentioned in the verse under discussion is associated with four titles - emigration, assistance, faith and righteous deeds. Thus, as long as all the 'companions' and the 'followers' adhered to these, they would be the object of Allāh's ﷻ grace, but the day they distanced themselves from these, they also distanced themselves from Allāh's ﷻ pleasure.

From the above discussion it becomes plainly apparent that the statements of the erudite, albeit prejudiced commentator - the author of *al-Manār* - in which he criticizes the Shī'ites for their lack of belief in the purity and uprightness of all the companions, possess no value and worth. The Shī'ites have not committed any sin save for the fact that they have accepted the rulings of intellect and reason, and the testimonies of the Noble Qur'ān and history, and disregarded the unfounded and incorrect distinctions presented by the prejudiced ones.¹²⁰

25. Why is it that some of the oppressors and sinners are drowned in comfort and bounties and do not witness any punishment?

From the verses of the Noble Qur'ān it can be inferred that those who have not become greatly polluted by means of sins, Allāh ﷻ - by means of alarm bells, reactions of their deeds or at times, punishments in accordance with the deeds committed by them - awakens them and returns them to the correct path. These are those, who until possess the worthiness to be guided aright and hence are eligible for the grace of Allāh ﷻ. In truth, their punishments and troubles can be regarded as bounties for them, as the Qur'ān says:

¹²⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 8, pg. 108

﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾

“Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return.”¹²¹

However those who have drowned themselves in sins and disobedience, and have transgressed all limits of rebelliousness, Allāh leaves them to their own selves and grants them an open field in order that they commit more sins and thus become deserving of the maximum punishment. These are those, who have advanced such that they cannot return; they have ripped apart the curtains of shame and modesty, and have stripped themselves of the worthiness to attain Divine guidance.

Verse 178 of Sūrat Āle ‘Imrān emphasises this purport when it says: And let not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them respite is better for their souls; We grant them respite only that they may add to their sins; and they shall have a disgraceful chastisement.

The courageous lady of Islam, Zaynab-e-Kubrā رضي الله عنها, in the sermon which she delivered in Syria based her argument upon this verse vis-à-vis the rebellious Yazīd - a manifest example of a sinner, who could never turn back - when she said to him: You are ecstatic today and imagine that confining the world for us, shutting out the horizons of the heavens upon us and leading us like captives from one city to another, is a sign of your strength? (You imagine that) you possess power and rank in the eyes of Allāh ﷻ while we have no standing before Him? You are mistaken! Allāh has granted you this freedom and respite so that your back becomes heavy by the burden of your sins and (do know that) a painful chastisement awaits you...

¹²¹ *Sūratul Rūm* (30), Verse 41

ANSWER TO ONE QUESTION

Incidentally, the above verse also answers this question which plagues the mind of many as to why is it that many of the oppressors and sinners are surrounded by comfort, and do not taste chastisement?

The Qur'ān says that these are individuals that are beyond rectification and, according to the law of creation, have been left to their own selves so that they drop down to the maximum extent possible and consequently become deserving of the severest punishment.

Apart from this, it can also be concluded from some of the verses of the Qur'ān that, at times, Allāh ﷻ grants numerous bounties to such individuals and, at a time when they are completely engrossed and absorbed in their pleasures, suddenly takes them away so that they may taste the maximum torment in the life of this very world. This is because losing such an affluent and leisurely life is intensely disturbing, as we read:

﴿ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴾

“But when they neglected that with which they had been admonished, We opened for them the doors of all things, until when they rejoiced in what they were given We seized them suddenly; then lo! they were in utter despair.”¹²²

In truth, such individuals are like one, who wickedly and unjustly climbs a tree, becoming happier as he ascends higher until he reaches the top of the tree; suddenly a storm begins to blow and he falls down from that height - a fall that leaves all his bones shattered.¹²³

¹²² *Sūratul An'ām* (6), Verse 44

¹²³ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 3, pg. 183

26. Why is it that nations, devoid of faith and belief, possess a life of ease and comfort?

Verse 96 of Sūratul A'rāf says:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ﴾

“And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned.”

In view of the above verse a question arises that if faith and piety are the cause for the descent of Divine blessings, why are nations that do not possess faith seen to be in great ease and luxury?

The answer to this question shall become clear by taking two points into regard:

The imagination that nations that lack faith and piety are in ease and comfort is a great error that stems from another error – that of regarding wealth to be the means of prosperity.

Usually people are given to imagine that the nation that possesses the maximum wealth and the most advanced industries is the most prosperous nation whereas if we were to penetrate into such societies and observe from close the gnawing pains that overwhelm their body and soul, we would realize that many of them are the most miserable ones on the earth – notwithstanding the fact that all these very comparative advancements are a consequence of effort, endeavour, discipline and sense of responsibility – all of which had been part of the teachings of the prophets.

Just as we write this portion of the commentary, the newspapers reported that New York - the most affluent and the advanced region of the material world - was witness to a very strange scenario arising out of a sudden blackout. Taking advantage of the situation,

innumerable people rampaged into shops and looted them; the looting was so widespread that the police arrested three thousand people in connection with this incident.

The actual pillagers were undoubtedly much more in number for these were the people who were unable to escape in time. Undeniably these individuals were not professionals, who had planned the general rampage beforehand since the incident itself was sudden and unexpected.

Accordingly, we infer that one blackout caused tens of thousands of people of the inhabitants of an affluent city to be transformed into pillagers; this not only reveals the moral decadence of a nation but also reflects the intense lack of social security.

The newspapers carried another report, which served to present a complete picture of this incident. The report stated that a celebrity, who had been staying in one of the reputed skyscraper hotels of New York during this period, said: The blackout made walking in the hotel aisles a dangerous proposition to the extent that the hotel staff refused to permit the guests to walk in the aisles alone to proceed to their rooms lest they be accosted by the plunderers, and so they used to send them to their rooms in groups of ten or more, under the protection of armed escorts! The celebrity added that he did not possess the courage to emerge from his room, until he was overwhelmed with hunger!

However, such blackouts in the backward oriental nations do not cause such problems indicating that despite possessing wealth and industrial advancement, they do not possess security in their environments. Apart from this, eye-witnesses report that murder in these environments is akin to drinking one mouthful of water.

And we clearly perceive that if one were to be given the entire world but at the same time made to live in such conditions, he would be of the most miserable of all men. Besides, the security problem is just one of their problems; they face numerous other social problems which, by themselves, are painful and

inconveniencing. In the light of these realities, wealth should not be mistaken and confused with prosperity.

As for what has been said regarding why those, who possess faith and piety, lagged behind in backwardness, it must be stated that if the meaning of faith and piety is to merely claim the acceptance of Islam and maintain adherence to the basic teachings of the prophets, then we do confess that such individuals have surely remained backward. However we know that the reality of faith and piety is their penetration into all acts of life, and this is something which cannot be achieved by mere claims.

It is unfortunate that in most of the Islamic societies today, the fundamental teachings of the prophets of Allāh ﷺ and Islam remain forsaken or semi-forsaken, leaving these societies to possess an appearance which is not that of true Muslims.

Islam invites towards purity, righteousness, trustworthiness, striving and effort – where is that trustworthiness and effort? Islam invites towards science, knowledge, awakening and awareness – where is that profuse knowledge and awareness? Islam invites towards unity, closeness of ranks and self-sacrifice – do all these dictates prevail over the Islamic societies today, perfectly and completely? Thus, we ought to acknowledge that Islam is one thing while we Muslims are something else.¹²⁴

27. If every person's sustenance has been decreed, then why are some (found to be) hungry?

Verse 6 of Sūrat Hūd says:

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا وَاعَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا﴾

“And there is no animal in the earth but on Allāh is the sustenance of it.”

In view of the above verse, the question that comes to mind is: Why it is that in today's world and all throughout history there are some,

¹²⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 6, pg. 268

who have died and continue to die of hunger? Have their livelihoods not been secured and safeguarded?

The answer to this questions demands attention towards the following points:

Firstly: Securing sustenance does not mean that it should be made ready for a person and sent to his house or a morsel prepared and put into his mouth; rather, it means that the groundwork has been prepared, but man's effort is a condition for transforming them into actuality. Even Maryam عليها السلام, in that severe state of labour in that lonely desert wherein Allāh ordained her sustenance to become manifest in the form of dates upon the date-palm, was ordered to move and addressed as follows:

﴿ وَهُرِّي إِلَيْكَ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ... ﴾

“And shake towards you the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates.”¹²⁵

Secondly: If, in the past and the present, men have usurped the rights of others and have taken their livelihoods from them unjustly, this does not prove that Allāh ﷻ has not secured their livelihoods. In other words, in addition to the issue of effort and striving, the existence of social justice is also a condition for a just distribution of sustenance.

And if it were to be said: Why does not Allāh ﷻ prevent the injustices perpetrated by the unjust ones? We state that the life of man is based on the freedom of will so that all are tested and examined, and not on force and compulsion - for in such a case the development and perfection (of man) would not take place.

Thirdly: In this very earth there exist numerous sources that can provide nutrition to mankind, but which need to be discovered and put to use. However, if man exhibits negligence in this regard, he is the one to be blamed.

¹²⁵ *Surat Maryam* (19), Verse 25

We ought not to forget that some areas of Africa, the inhabitants of which die of hunger today, are amongst the most enriched regions of the world. However, destructive factors, which were mentioned above, have brought them to this miserable state of theirs.¹²⁶

28. What are the reasons for the backwardness of the Muslims?

It can be clearly concluded from the verses of the Qur'ān that whenever we suffer reverses and failures, they are always a result of one of the following two factors: Either we have neglected and failed in our jihād and in our efforts, or that we were lacking in sincerity. And if these two were to gather together, as per the emphatic Divine promise, success and guidance shall certainly come our way.

Why have Muslims, the leaders of yesterday, lagged behind today?

Why do they extend their hands to the foreigners for everything, even for their culture and their own laws?

Why should they rely upon others to protect themselves vis-à-vis political storms and military assaults?

Why is it that yesterday the others benefited from their knowledge and culture whereas today they (the Muslims) have to turn to the others?

And finally, why is it that they are captives in the clutches of others and their lands are under the occupation of the transgressors?

All these 'whys' possess just one answer: Either they have forgotten the jihād or that the intentions have become polluted.

Indeed, jihād in the fields of science, culture, politics, economics and military has been thrust into the dark world of forgetfulness. Affection for the self, love of the world, desire for comfort and pleasure and personal motives have prevailed over them to the extent that those of them who are killed by own hands, are more than those killed by the enemies!

¹²⁶ *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, pg. 357

The overwhelmed state of some West-stricken and East-stricken individuals, self-selling by some of those vested with authority, and isolation of intellectuals and scholars have not only taken the jihād from them but also the sincerity.

Whenever there manifests slight sincerity amongst our ranks and our warriors jolt themselves into activity, successes are achieved one after the other and the fetters of captivity fall apart. Despairs turn into hopes, failures into successes, humiliation into dignity, and disarray and hypocrisy into unity and cohesion. How inspirational is the Qur’ān, which, in a short sentence, has not only mentioned the malady but has also presented its remedy!

Truly, those who strive in the path of Allāh ﷻ are the beneficiaries of Divine guidance and it is self-evident that in the presence of His guidance, deviation and failure are inconceivable.

In any event, every person plainly senses and perceives this Qur’ānic reality in his efforts that when he sets out to strive for Allāh ﷻ and in His path, doors open up before him, problems decrease in severity and adversities tend to become more bearable.¹²⁷

29. What is the incident of Fadak?

Fadak had been one of the villages around Medinah situated at a distance of 140 kilometres from Khaybar. In the year 7 AH when the forts of Khaybar fell one after another to the soldiers of Islam and the central power of the Jews was smashed, the inhabitants of Fadak approached the Noble Prophet ﷺ in submission and handed over one half of their land and gardens to him retaining the other half for themselves. In addition, they also agreed to shoulder the responsibility of cultivating his share of the land and used to receive some benefits for this effort of theirs.

In view of the verse of booty (Faī), this land was specific to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and he could utilize it for himself or use it in other

¹²⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 16, pg. 350

instances as stated in verse 7 of Sūratul Ḥaṣhr and accordingly, he gifted it to his daughter Fāṭimah عليها السلام. This is a fact, which has been emphasized and stated by numerous Sunnite and Shī'ite historians and commentators. In the commentary *al-Durrul Manthūr*, it has been narrated from Ibne 'Abbās that when the verse:

﴿ وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ ﴾

“Then give to the near of kin his due”¹²⁸

was revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ gifted Fadak to Fāṭimah عليها السلام:¹²⁹

أَقْطَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَاطِمَةَ فَدَكًا.

In the chapter of *ṣilah raḥim* (establishing bonds of consanguinity) of the book *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, written as annotations for the book *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibne Ḥanbal, it has been reported from Abū Sa'īd Khudrī that when the above verse was revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ sought Fāṭimah عليها السلام and said to her:

يَا فَاطِمَةُ لَكَ فَدَكٌ.

“O' Fāṭimah! Fadak is for you.”¹³⁰

Ḥākim Nishābūrī has also reported this same meaning in his book, which deals with history.¹³¹

Ibne Abil Ḥadīd too, in his commentary of *Nahjul Balāghah*, has mentioned the incident of Fadak in great detail¹³² and so too have numerous other books.

But after the Noble Prophet ﷺ those, who perceived this economic power in the hands of 'Alī's عليه السلام spouse as a danger to their political power and were determined to isolate his supporters in every respect, confiscated it on the basis of a fabricated tradition:

¹²⁸ *Sūratul Rūm* (30), Verse 38

¹²⁹ *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, pg. 177

¹³⁰ *Kanzul 'Ummāl*, vol. 2, pg. 158

¹³¹ Refer the book *Fadak*, pg. 49

¹³² *Sharh of Nahjul Balāgha* of Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, vol. 16, pg. 209 onwards

نَحْنُ مَعَاشِرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ لَا نُورَثُ.

And despite the fact that Fāṭimah عليها السلام was in official possession of the land - and one in possession of something is not asked to present witnesses - she was asked to present her witnesses (that Fadak belonged to her). She presented them, who testified that the Noble Prophet ﷺ had personally gifted it to her, but they disregarded these witnesses. In later periods, those Caliphs who desired to express their inclinations towards the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام, would return Fadak to them but soon after another would come up and confiscate it once again! This was repeated on numerous occasions during the time of the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs.

The incident of Fadak and the events associated with it during the initial stages of Islam and in the later eras are of the most painful, sorrowful but at the same time, the most admonitory portions of the history of Islam which ought to be placed under meticulous study so that it illuminates various other incidents of Islam.

Significantly, the Sunni narrator - Muslim ibne Ḥajjāj Nishābūrī - has reported the incident of Fāṭimah's عليها السلام demand for Fadak in detail in his book *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and reports from ‘Āishah that after the first Caliph's refusal to return Fadak to Fāṭimah عليها السلام, she was enraged with him and did not speak a word to him for as long as she was alive.^{133 and 134}

30. Was Abū Ṭālib a Muslim?

All the Shi‘ite scholars and some of the eminent Sunnite ones like Ibne Abil Ḥadīd, the commentator of *Nahjul Balāghah*, Qastalānī, in his book *Irshād al-Sāri* and Zīni Dahlan, in his annotations to the book *Sīrah Halabī*, have regarded Abū Ṭālib as being a Muslim. In the original Islamic sources too, there exist numerous evidences in support of this issue, which when studied leave us profoundly

¹³³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, pg. 1380, no. 52 of ‘The Book of Jihād’

¹³⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 510

astonished and perplexed as to why Abū Ṭālib finds himself the object of such unkindness and accusation?

How is it possible that one, who had defended the Noble Prophet ﷺ by his entire existence, and time after time had presented himself and his children as a shield for him in times of peril, be the object of such an allegation?

And here the discerning researchers have surmised that this wave of antagonism against Abū Ṭālib is one that is political in nature and stems from the opposition of the evil lineage of Banī Umayyah to 'Alī ؑ.

This is because it is not just Abū Ṭālib, who due to his proximity with 'Alī ؑ, has found himself to be an object of this onslaught; rather, we observe that in the history of Islam, whosoever happened to possess a close relation - in any manner whatsoever - with 'Alī ؑ had not remained protected from these foul and shabby offensives. In truth, Abū Ṭālib had no crime to his name save that he was the father of 'Alī ibne Abī Ṭālib - the great leader of Islam!

Here, we enumerate, only briefly, some varied arguments that bear a clear testimony to the faith of Abū Ṭālib, and leave the details for books that have been particularly devoted to this issue:

Even prior to the proclamation of the prophethood of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, Abū Ṭālib had been well cognizant of the fact that his nephew would attain the rank of prophethood. This is because the historians have written that on one of the journeys that Abū Ṭālib had undertaken to Egypt in the caravan of the Quraish, he had taken his twelve-year old nephew Muḥammad, along with him. In the course of this journey various extraordinary acts were witnessed from him; in addition, as soon as the caravan came across a monk by the name of Bahīra - who had been engaged in worship in the monastery for years, possessed knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and used to be visited by the trade caravans who passed that way - Muḥammad ﷺ, who was not more than twelve years old then, attracted his attention. Bahīra, after gazing at him deeply and

profoundly, asked: To which of you does this child belong? Those around pointed to Abū Ṭālib, who informed him that he was his nephew.

Bahīra said: “This child has a brilliant future before him. He is the very prophet, whose prophethood has been prophesized by the Divine books and whose attributes I have read in them.”¹³⁵

Even before this encounter, there had been other indications which made Abū Ṭālib aware of the prophethood and the spirituality of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

As has been stated by the Sunni scholar Shahristānī (the author of *al-Milal Wal Niha*) and others, one year skies of Mecca withheld their rains and the city was caught in the grip of a severe drought. Abū Ṭālib ordered his nephew, Muḥammad, who was just a suckling then, to be brought to him. When the child, suntil wrapped in swaddling-clothes, was handed to him, he stood before the Ka’bah, raised the child upwards three times and each time beseeched: O’ Lord! By the sake of this child, send down the blessed rains upon us.

It was not long before a cloud became visible above the horizon and soon covered the skies above Mecca; it then began to pour with such intensity that it was feared that the Ka’bah might suffer damage.

Shahristānī then writes: This incident, which indicates Abū Ṭālib’s knowledge of his nephew’s prophethood right from his infancy, proves that he believed in the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Later, Abū Ṭālib recited the following verses in connection with this incident:

وَ أَيْضُ يُسْتَسْقَى الْعَمَامُ بِوَجْهِهِ تَمَالُ الْيَتَامَى عِصْمَةً لِلْأَرَامِلِ.

“He is a luminous-faced one and it is for him that the clouds pour down rain he is the shelter of the orphans and the protector of the widows.”

يَلُودُ بِهِ الْهَالِكُ مِنْ آلِ هَاشِمٍ. فَهُمْ عِنْدَهُ فِي نِعْمَةٍ وَ فَوَاضِلَ.

¹³⁵ An abstract from *Sīrah Ibn Hishām* (vol. 1, pg. 191), *Sīrah Halabī* (vol. 1, pg. 131) and other books.

“Those from the Banī Hāshim who face destruction seek refuge in him and it is by means of him that they find themselves receiving bounties and favours.”

وَمِيزَانُ صِدْقٍ لَا يَخِيْسُ شَعِيرَةً وَوَرَّانٌ صِدْقٍ وَزُنْهُ عَيْرٌ هَائِلٍ.

“He is that balance of justice that never violates (even) one grain of barley and he is a correct measurer whose weight and measurement are not to be feared for error.”

In addition to Shahrstānī, numerous eminent historians too have reported the incident of the people resorting to Abū Ṭālib during the famine, and his entreaty to Allāh by employing the honour of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. ‘Allāmah Aminī has mentioned this incident in his book, *al-Ghadīr*, quoting it from the books *Sharḥ Bukhārī*, *al-Mawāhib al-Ladunniyyah*, *al-Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubra*, *Sharḥ Bahjah al-Mahāfil*, *Sīrah Halabī*, *Sīrah Nabawī* and *Talabah al-Ṭālib*.¹³⁶

In addition, certain well-known Islamic books contain some poems from Abū Ṭālib, all of which have been gathered and this collection referred to as *Diwān Abī Ṭālib*. Some of these poems are presented below:

وَاللّٰهُ لَنْ يَصِلُوْا اِلَيْكَ بِجَمْعِهِمْ حَتّٰى اَوْسَدَ فِي التُّرَابِ دَفِيْنًا.

“O’ Nephew! The enemies shall never reach you until such time that Abū Ṭālib has rested in the earth and taken the grave as his bed,”

فَاُصَدِّعْ بِاَمْرِكَ مَا عَلَيْنِكَ عَصَاةً وَاَبْشِرْ وَقِرَّ بِذَاكَ مِنْهُ عِيُوْنَا.

“So accomplish your assignment and fear none give glad tidings and make the eyes joyous and cheerful.”

وَدَعَوْتِيْ وَرَعَمْتُ اَنْتَكَ نَاصِحِيْ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقْتَ وَكُنْتَ قَبْلَ اَمِيْنًا.

“You invited me towards your faith and I know fully well that you are a sincere adviser to me and surely you invited and are trustworthy in your invitation.”

¹³⁶ *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 7, pg. 346

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ دِينَ مُحَمَّدٍ مِنْ خَيْرِ أَدْيَانِ الْبَرِيَّةِ دِينًا.

“Indeed I have perceived that the religion of Muḥammad is the most excellent of all religions.”¹³⁷

أَلَمْ تَعَلَّمُوا أَنَّا وَجَدْنَا مُحَمَّدًا نَبِيًّا كَمُوسَى خُطِّ فِي أَوَّلِ الْكُتُبِ.

“O’ Quraish, do you not know that we have found Muḥammad to be a prophet just as Mūsā was and his mention has been recorded in the Divine books?”

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْعِبَادِ مَحَبَّةً وَلَا سِنَّ فِيمَنْ خَصَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي الْحُبِّ.

“The servants of Allāh possess a special fondness with respect to him and this is not out of place for one whom Allāh has singled out for His love.”¹³⁸

Ibne Abīl Ḥadīd, after presenting a great number of Abū Ṭālib’s poems (which Ibne Shahr Āshūb, in his book *Mutashābihat al-Qur’ān*, has claimed to be three thousand in number) says: After going through the entire collection of these poems, there does not remain a semblance of a doubt for us that Abū Ṭālib had indeed believed in the religion of his nephew.

Traditions have been narrated from the Noble Prophet ﷺ which testify to the faith of his self-sacrificing uncle - Abū Ṭālib. According to the author of the book *Abū Ṭālib: Mu’minu Quraysh*, when Abū Ṭālib passed away the Noble Prophet ﷺ, after having escorted his funeral and as he mourned his death, said: O’ My Father! O’ Abū Ṭālib! How sad I am over your death? How can I ever forget the tragedy of your death? O’ you who fostered me when I was an infant and accepted by invitation when I was a grown up; in

¹³⁷ *Khazānah al-‘Arab, Tarīkh Ibn Kathīr, Sharḥ of Nahjul Balāgha Ibn Abil Ḥadīd, Faṭḥ al-Bārī, Bulūgh al-‘Arab, Tārīkh Abi al-Fidā, Sīrah al-Nabawī* etc., as reported in *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

proximity to you, I was as an eye is to its socket, and as a soul is to the body.¹³⁹

Also, he ﷺ used to repeatedly confess:

مَا نَأَلْتُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ شَيْئًا حَتَّى مَاتَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ.

“The Quraish were unable to inconvenience me in any way until after the death of Abū Ṭālib.”¹⁴⁰

It is an indisputable fact that, years before Abū Ṭālib’s death, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been ordered to refrain from establishing any kind of cordial relationship with the polytheists. In such a situation, exhibition of such fondness and affection towards Abū Ṭālib on his ﷺ part indicates that he ﷺ had known that he was a monotheist. Or else, how could it be conceivable that while he prohibited others from befriending the polytheists he himself exhibited affection towards Abū Ṭālib that reached the frontiers of love?

In traditions that have been narrated from the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام too, there are abundant evidences that meet the eye which attest to Abū Ṭālib’s faith and sincerity. These traditions, mentioning all of which would only protract this discussion, contain rational and logical arguments, like the tradition of the fourth Imām عليه السلام in which it has been reported that the Imām عليه السلام, in reply to a question, attests to the faith of Abū Ṭālib and then says: Honestly, I am amazed as to why some are given to imagine that Abū Ṭālib was a disbeliever! Do they not realize that by harbouring such beliefs, they hurl taunts and sarcasms at Abū Ṭālib and the Noble Prophet ﷺ? But has it not been prohibited in several verses of the Qur’ān for a woman to continue to remain in the matrimony of her disbelieving spouse after she has accepted Islam? It is an incontrovertible fact that

¹³⁹ Sheikh al-Abātih, quoting from the book *Abū Ṭālib: The Believer of the Quraish*.

¹⁴⁰ Ṭabarī, quoting from the book *Abu Ṭālib: The Believer from the Quraish*.

Fāṭimah Bint Asad, who had been of those who had taken a lead into Islam, had Abū Ṭālib as her spouse all through her life.¹⁴¹

Apart from all these, if we were to be sceptical of all things, the one reality with respect to which none can harbour scepticism and doubt is that Abū Ṭālib was of the most vociferous and intense supporters of Islam and the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and his support was in such measure that it cannot be interpreted as stemming from consanguineous ties or tribal partianship.

The most manifest example of this being the incident of Shi'b Abī Ṭālib which has been reported by all the historians; when the Quraish subjected the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims to an intense social, economic and political blockade and severed all connections with them, Abū Ṭālib was the only supporter and defender of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. For three years he abandoned all his other work and, taking the Hashemites to a valley located between the mountains of Mecca and popularly known as Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, settled down there. His self-sacrifice reached such an extent that in addition to constructing special towers for protection against the attacks of the Quraish, every night, he would move the Noble Prophet ﷺ to a different place to sleep and make his dear son 'Alī ؑ sleep in his place instead. When 'Alī ؑ said: Dear father! Under these circumstances, I am bound to be killed, Abū Ṭālib said: Dear son! Do not lose your forbearance. Every living thing advances towards death. I have sacrificed you for the son of 'Abdullāh.

Interestingly, 'Alī ؑ responds to his father's words by saying: Dear father! These words of mine were not out of my apprehension of being killed in the path of Muḥammad ﷺ rather, it was spoken since I wanted you to know how obedient I am to you and that I am fully prepared to help Aḥmad.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ *Kitāb al-Hujjah, al-Darajāt al-Rafī'ah* quoting from *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8.

¹⁴² *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8.

We are of the opinion that every person, who casts aside his prejudice and studies the gold lines of history about Abū Ṭālib impartially would concur with Ibne Abil Ḥadīd and say:¹⁴³

وَلَوْلَا أَبُو طَالِبٍ وَابْنُهُ لَمَا مَثَلَ الدِّينُ شَخِصًا فَقَامَا فَذَاكَ بِمَكَّةَ آوَى وَحَامَى وَ هَذَا
بِثَرِبَ جَسَّ الْحَمَامَا.

“If it was not for the presence of Abū Ṭālib and his son, the religion (of Islam) would never have stayed in place and stood up aloft. Abū Ṭālib rushed to the assistance of the Noble Prophet ﷺ in Mecca, while ‘Alī ؑ, in supporting Islam, plummeted into a whirlpool of death in Yathrib (Medinah)!”¹⁴⁴

31. What is the criterion with regards to the greater sins?

In connection with the greater sins, reference to which has been made in several verses of the Noble Qur’ān¹⁴⁵, there have been many views by commentators on the one hand and the scholars of traditions and the jurists on the other.

Some have regarded all sins as being greater sins; this is because against Allāh, the Mighty, every sin is enormous.

Others are of the opinion that the concept of lesser and greater, employed in connection with sins, is relative in nature. Every sin, in comparison to a more serious sin is looked upon as being lesser while in comparison to a less serious sin, as great.

Some believe that Allāh’s ﷻ warning, in the Qur’ān, of chastisement with respect to a sin, serves as a criterion for that sin to be considered great.

Occasionally it has also been said that every sin which necessitates the implementation of legal (religious) penalty is a greater sin.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 5, pg. 192

¹⁴⁵ *Sūratul Nisā’* (4), Verse 31; *Sūratul Shūra* (42), Verse 37, and the verses presently under consideration.

However, in view of the fact that the term ‘great’ indicates upon the enormity of the sin, the best description for it would be every sin, which happens to possess one of the following, can be regarded as a greater sin:

The sins with respect to which Allāh ﷻ has issued a warning of chastisement.

Sins that have been regarded by the Imāms and the traditions as being grave.

Sins that have been regarded by religious sources to be more severe than sins that are known to be of the greater sins.

And finally, sins, which the authentic traditions expressly state to be great.

The greater sins that are mentioned in the Islamic traditions vary in number. In some traditions, they are said to be seven in number (killing a soul, being disowned by the parents, usury, returning to the land of kufr after emigrating from it, falsely accusing a chaste woman of adultery, misappropriating the property of orphans and flight from jihād.)¹⁴⁶

Some other traditions have enumerated them to be seven in number with the difference being that ‘being disowned by the parents’ has been substituted by:

كُلُّ مَا أَوْجَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارَ.

“All (those sins) for which Allāh has made (the punishment of) Hell mandatory.”

In some, their number is seen to be ten, while in others it is 19 and in yet others the figure is much higher.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 11, Chapter Abwābu Jihād al-Nafs, Chapter 46, no. 1

¹⁴⁷ For further explanation, refer the above source (Chapter 46 from Abwābu Jihād al-Nafs). Thirty seven traditions, which enumerate and specify the Greater sins, have been mentioned there.

This difference in their figure stems from the fact that all the greater sins are not uniform and similar - some are more serious and grave than the others, or in other words, they are Akbar al-Kabāir (greatest of the greater sins) and thus, there is no conflict or contradiction amongst them.¹⁴⁸

32. Why is it necessary to utter Allāh's name at the time of slaughtering (animals)?

Does reciting the name of Allāh ﷻ or another entity while slaughtering an animal have an influence upon the meat of the animal as far as hygiene and sanitation is concerned?

In answer to this question it must be mentioned that it is not essential for the name of Allāh ﷻ or another entity to necessitate an impact on the substance and essence of the meat in terms of cleanliness. This is because, the prohibition imposed on certain things in Islam are dictated by several factors. At times, the prohibition is for the purpose of hygiene and protection of the body, while at other times it is for the purification of the soul and on occasions it is for preserving the social order. In reality, the prohibition imposed upon consumption of meat of animals that have been slaughtered by reciting the names of idols has a spiritual, ethical and educative dimension associated with it. Such acts distance man from Allāh ﷻ and possess undesirable psychological effects; this is so since this act belongs to the rites associated with polytheism and paganism, and serves to revive their memories.¹⁴⁹

33. How does Islam view monasticism?

In verse 27 of Sūratul Ḥadīd, we read:

﴿ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ﴾

¹⁴⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 22, pg. 541

¹⁴⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 588

“And (as for) monkery, they innovated it-- We did not prescribe it to them-- only to seek Allāh’s pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance.”

In view of the above verse, the question that arises is: What is Islam’s viewpoint about monasticism?

The term رَهْبَانِيَّة (Monasticism) is derived from رَهْبَة meaning fear and dread, which, in this case, means fear of Allāh ﷻ. According to Rāghib, in his book Mufradāt, it is a fear, which is in combination with piety and perturbation. The word تَرَهَّب is in the meaning of تَعَبَّد , to worship; and رَهْبَانِيَّة means intense devotion and worship.

Monasticism of a desired kind existed amongst the Christians although it had not been made compulsory in Christianity; however, the followers of ‘Isā ﷺ distorted the concept by hauling it beyond its limits.

And it is for this reason that Islam has vehemently denounced it and the well-known tradition, which states:

لَا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ.

“There is no (room for) monasticism in Islam”, is witnessed in numerous Islamic sources.¹⁵⁰

One of the ugly innovations of the Christians with respect to monasticism had been ‘prohibition of marriage’ for the males and females who had abandoned the world. Others were ‘social seclusion’, disregarding the human responsibilities within a society, selecting secluded and far-flung monasteries and nunneries for living and worship in an environment, isolated from society. Later, great evils came into existence within the monasteries and the living centres of the monks, some of which - Allāh Willing - we shall present later as a concluding portion of this discussion.

¹⁵⁰ This tradition has been reported in *Majma’ul Bayān* under رهب as also in *al-Nihāyah* of Ibn Kathīr.

Certainly, the monks and nuns did extend positive services too like nursing individuals suffering from diseases that were dangerous and difficult to cure such as leprosy; propagation of religion in regions that were distant and amongst people that were wild and barbaric; initiating research programmes etc. Nevertheless, these acts in comparison to the entire system were trivial and insignificant, and on the whole, its evils were far greater than its benefits.

Fundamentally, man is an entity that has been created for a life within a society, and his material and spiritual development can only be achieved within a social life, and it is for this reason that none of the Divine religions have rejected this concept (of social life). On the contrary, they have endeavoured to strengthen its foundation.

Allāh has placed 'sexual desire' within man to preserve lineage, and every thing that attempts to reject it totally is absolutely incorrect.

The Islamic abstemiousness (zuhd), which means leading a simple life, eliminating luxuries and not becoming a captive of wealth and rank, is in no way related to the issue of monasticism. This is so since monasticism means segregation and alienation from the society whereas abstemiousness means liberation for a more social living.

In a well-known tradition we read that one day the son of 'Uthmān ibne Maz'ūn died which so aggrieved him that he declared his house to be a mosque and (abandoning all other work) engaged himself in worship. When the Noble Prophet ﷺ came to know of this, he summoned him and said:

يَا عُثْمَانَ بْنَ مَطْعُونٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكْتُبْ عَلَيْنَا الرَّهْبَانِيَّةَ إِنَّمَا رَهْبَانِيَّةُ
أُمَّتِي الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

“O' 'Uthmān! Surely, Allāh, the Blessed and the Exalted has not ordained monasticism for us; monasticism of my ummah is only

jihād in the way of Allāh.”¹⁵¹

The above tradition is an allusion to the fact that if you desire to renounce the material life, do not do so negatively and by means of social seclusion; rather, seek it positively – in jihād in the way of Allāh ﷺ.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ then went on to present a detailed explanation of the merits of congregational prayers – which itself emphasizes the rejection of monasticism and seclusion.

In another tradition we read that ‘Alī ibne Ja‘far asks his brother Imām Mūsā ibne Kāzīm ؑ: “Does it befit a Muslim to go on a journey or adopt asceticism, enclose himself in his house and not come out of it?” The Imām ؑ replied: “No.”¹⁵²

Explanation

The journey that has been prohibited in this tradition is something which is akin to monasticism - a kind of itinerant monasticism; some people, without procuring for themselves a house, engaging themselves in work or seeking to earn a livelihood, converted themselves into globetrotters without provisions and supplies. Constantly on the move from one place to another and fulfilling their needs by begging from the people, they looked upon this as a kind of renunciation of the world. But Islam has rejected the stationary as well as itinerant monasticism; yes, according to the teachings of Islam the important thing is that man should be abstemious while within the heart of society and not while secluded and segregated from it!

THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF MONASTICISM

The history of Christianity reveals that monasticism, in its present form, had not existed in the first century of Christianity, but was reborn after the third century AD during the manifestation of the Roman emperor Disiyus and his intense drive against the followers

¹⁵¹ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 70, pg. 114 (Chapter al-Nahī ‘an al-Rahbaniyah), no. 1

¹⁵² *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 70, pg. 119, no. 10

of 'Isā (عليه السلام), who, as a result of their defeat at the hands of this brutal emperor, sought refuge in the wilderness.¹⁵³

The Islamic traditions too report this meaning, albeit more profoundly. It has been narrated that the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said to Ibne Mas'ud: "Do you know from where did monasticism originate?"

Ibne Mas'ud replied: "Allāh and His Messenger know better."

He (ﷺ) said: After 'Isā (عليه السلام), some tyrants came to the fore on the scene of leadership. The believers fought them three times and suffered defeat and so, they fled to the deserts and mountains, and, awaiting the arrival of the prophet, prophesized (Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) by 'Isā (عليه السلام)), engaged themselves in worship in the caves. Some of them remained on their religion while others followed the path of disbelief.

Then continuing, he (ﷺ) said: "Do you know what is the monasticism of my ummah?"

Ibne Mas'ud said: "Allāh and His Messenger know better."

He (ﷺ) said:

الْهَجْرَةُ وَالْجِهَادُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالصَّوْمُ وَالْحَجُّ وَالْعُمْرَةُ.

"Emigration, Jihād, Ṣalāt, fasting, Ḥajj and 'Umrah."¹⁵⁴

Will Durant, the renowned historian, in volume 13 of his well-known history presents a detailed discussion about monks, and is of the opinion that it was from the 4th century AD that nuns began to affiliate themselves with the monks; day by day monasticism was on the increase until it reached its zenith in the 10th century AD.¹⁵⁵

Undoubtedly, this social occurrence, like other occurrences, in addition to possessing historical roots also possesses psychological

¹⁵³ *Dā'irah al-Ma'ārif Qarn Bīstum*, under رهب.

¹⁵⁴ *Majma'ul Bayān*, vol. 9, pg. 243; Another tradition, similar to this but slightly abridged, has been mentioned in the commentary *al-Durr al-Manthur*, (vol. 6, pg. 177)

¹⁵⁵ William Durant, vol. 13, pg. 443

ones; one of the facts which can be alluded to is that the psychological reaction of different individuals and nations against defeats and failures are totally different and varied. Some develop an inclination to adopt seclusion and introversion, totally withdrawing themselves from society and social activities whereas there are some, who derive the lesson of endurance from failures, and come to possess greater firmness and resistance. The former group resorts to monasticism or something akin to it while the latter, in contrast, becomes more social.

ETHICAL AND MORAL EVILS RESULTING DUE TO MONASTICISM

Swerving from the laws of creation always occasion negative repercussions and thus, it is not a matter of astonishment that when man distances himself from a social life, which is inherent and innate to him, he suffers from intense negative ramifications. And it is for this reason that monasticism, which is in contrast to the fundamentals of man's natural disposition, gives birth to great evils, some of which are as follows:

Man, by nature, is civil and urban, and monasticism is in contradiction with this spirit of man and thus draws human societies into decadence and change of direction.

Not only does monasticism not lead to the purification of morals and perfection of soul, instead it leads to ethical deviation, lethargy, conceit, vanity, superiority complex and the like. And upon the supposition that man does manage to acquire an ethical excellence in a state of seclusion, it would not be regarded as an accomplishment, for excellence is when man is able to liberate himself from moral uncleanness while he is within a society.

Renunciation of marriage, which is one of the fundamentals of monasticism, not only does not bring about any virtue but on the contrary results in psychological disorders. The book, *Encyclopedia of the 20th Century*, states: Some of the monks considered paying

attention to the female sex to be a Satanic act and harboured this concept to such an extent that they were unwilling to bring the female species of animals to their houses, lest its satanic soul cause harm and detriment to their spirituality!!

Despite this, history is witness to numerous atrocious acts from the monasteries, such that, according to Will Durant, Pope Innocent III described one of the monasteries as a brothel!¹⁵⁶

Some of these monasteries had been transformed into centres of congregation for the world-loving, gluttonous and licentious ones to such an extent that the best of the wines could be found in them.

Of course, according to the testimony of history, 'Isā ﷺ never married, however this was definitely not because of his opposition to marriage - rather, his short life-span coupled with his perpetual journeys to different parts of the world for the propagation of religion did not permit him this liberty.

The discussion of monasticism befits separate books, devoted entirely to this topic, and if we were to dwell upon it in detail, we would deviate from our commentarial discussion.

We conclude this discussion by presenting a tradition from Imām 'Alī ﷺ, who, while interpreting the verse:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴾

“Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds? (These are) they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands.”¹⁵⁷ said:

هُمُ الرَّهْبَانُ الَّذِينَ حَسِبُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي السَّوَارِي.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ *Sūratul Kahf*(18), Verse 103, 104

“One of the manifest examples of this are the monks, who had imprisoned themselves in the mountains and wilderness, and were under the impression that they were performing an excellent work.”¹⁵⁸ and ¹⁵⁹

34. What do ‘spiritual vision’ and ‘mystical intuition’ mean?

One of the sources of acquiring cognizance is spiritual vision and mystical intuition.

Primarily it is essential to define this source, which is unfamiliar to a great number of people, in order that on the one hand, the difference between this and the issue of revelation, inspiration and innate disposition becomes clear and the ignorant ones do not consider it to be a figment of imagination and on the other, the path of misuse that many have resorted to in connection with this topic and which has compelled many to look upon it with scepticism, is blocked.

The entities of the world of existence are fundamentally of two kinds:

1. Entities that can be perceived by the senses; these entities are referred to as the World of Senses.
2. Entities that are concealed from our senses and cannot be perceived by them; these are referred to as the World of Unseen.

But at times it is possible that man acquires a new perception, enabling him to witness a portion of the World of Unseen (as per his capability). In other words, the curtains are drawn aside and some of the realities of the World of Unseen are made manifest for him as clearly as man perceives things by his senses - rather, much clearer and in a manner which imparts much more certainty.

This state is referred to as spiritual vision or mystical intuition.

¹⁵⁸ *Kanzul Ummāl*, vol. 2, no. 4496

¹⁵⁹ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 384

This is the same thing that the Qurʾān mentions in verse 5 and 6 of Sūratul Takāthur:

﴿ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ. لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ﴾

“Nay! if you had known with a certain knowledge, You should most certainly have seen the hell!”

In various Islamic sources, regarding both the believers and the offenders, it has been stated that at the time of death they come to acquire a spiritual vision as a result of which they are able witness the angels and the holy souls of Allāh’s awliyā, whereas those around them lack the ability to perceive these things.

This is that very state which the Noble Prophet ﷺ came to possess during the Battle of Khandaq when he said: “In the spark that was created by the striking of a pickaxe with a stone, I witnessed the palaces of Khusroe or Caesar or the castles of the Yemeni kings.”¹⁶⁰

Similarly, it has been reported about Āminah, the honourable mother of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, that when she bore the Noble Prophet ﷺ in her womb, she said: I saw a light emanate from me and by means of it I witnessed the palaces of the land of Basri, in Syria. These are neither revelation nor are they spiritual inspiration but a kind of perception that differs vastly from sensory vision.

This is that very station which a renowned critic has mentioned, saying: If an eye of the Unseen opens up for you, the atoms of this universe shall become intimate and share their secrets with you. It is then that you shall hear the talks of water and flower. Hearing the hubbub of the glorification (of Allāh) of the entities of the universe, scepticism shall be erased from within you. The ears of the untrustworthy ones do not hear these realities and only the person, who has been made intimate, is worthy of hearing these sounds and secrets.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ *Kāmil Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 2, pg. 179

¹⁶¹ A summary of some renowned verses.

Thus, mystical intuition and vision can be defined in one sentence as: The entry into the meta-sensory world and witnessing its realities by an inner eye in a manner similar to sensory vision - only more powerful or listening to those murmurings by the ears of the soul.

Of course, the words of every person who claims such vision cannot be hastily accepted, nor can the words of every claimant be believed. Nevertheless, the initial discussion in this topic is concerned with the actual existence of such a source of (Divine) cognizance¹⁶², after which comes the discussion regarding the manner of attaining it, and finally, the means of distinguishing between the true and false claimants.

35. How can ‘allotment of sustenance on the part of Allāh’ and ‘working for one’s livelihood’ be consistent with one another?

In verse 26 of Sūratul Ra’d, we read:

﴿اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَ يَقْدِرُ﴾

“Allāh amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom He pleases.”

Taking into consideration the above verse, the question, which arises, is: How can the fact, that Allāh ﷻ apportions the sustenance, be regarded to be consistent with ‘expending effort for one’s livelihood’?

It is not just this verse which declares the increase and decrease in sustenance to be dictated by Allāh ﷻ, but from various other verses too it can be clearly inferred that Allāh ﷻ augments or diminishes it from whosoever He pleases. However, these words do not mean, as some ignorant individuals have conjectured, that one should stop one’s efforts and sit down in a corner and wait for Allāh ﷻ to provide the allotted sustenance. Such individuals, whose negative thoughts provide an excellent excuse for those who look upon

¹⁶² *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur’an*, vol. 1, pg. 252

religion as being unconstructive, are oblivious of two fundamental points:

Firstly: The Divine Will and desire referred to in these verses is not something that is uncalculated; Allāh's Will is not separate from His wisdom and always takes into account ability, competence and worthiness.

Secondly: This issue does not mean that we reject the Realm of Causes. This is because the Realm of Causes of the world of creation is also a consequence of Allāh's Will and can never be separated from the Legislative will of Allāh ﷻ.

Expressing it more clearly, Allāh's ﷻ will with respect to enlarging and straitening sustenance is bound by certain conditions, which are dominant over man's life - effort, sincerity and self-sacrifice and conversely, laziness and evil intentions play a determinative role in this regard. And this is why the Qur'ān has repeatedly regarded man as being governed by his own effort and activity, and is of the opinion that the benefits which he derives out of life is in the measure of his endeavour.

It is for this reason that in the book *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, in the section of trade, income and work, a chapter has been designated in connection with expending exertion for the purpose of procuring sustenance, and numerous traditions have been mentioned in this regard. In addition, another chapter has been devoted to traditions that reproach idleness, excessive sleep and laziness in the path of fulfilling the requirements of life.

In one of the traditions, the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ says: "In the very beginning, when entities entered into marriage, laziness and weakness married each other and an offspring, by the name of 'poverty', was born to them!"¹⁶³

In a tradition, Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷺ says: "Do not exhibit indolence with respect to procuring sustenance and fulfilling the needs of the

¹⁶³ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, vol. 12, pg. 38

life, for our fathers and forefathers used to strive for it and endeavoured to procure it!”¹⁶⁴

In another tradition Imām al-Bāqir عليه السلام says: “I abhor the person, who is slothful with respect to his worldly work, for one who is lazy in his worldly work (despite the fact that he reaps its returns soon), is lazier in his work related the Hereafter.”¹⁶⁵

It has also been reported that Imām Mūsā ibne Ja’far عليه السلام said: “Allāh detests one who sleeps excessively, and regards one who is idle (and does not work) as His enemy.”^{166 and 167}

36. Is naskh (abrogation) permitted in the religious laws?

According to the dictionary, نسخ means to efface and to dispel while, in the terminology of the Shari’ah, it means altering one ruling and replacing it with another one. For example:

After the emigration to Medinah, the Muslims, for a period of fifteen months, offered their prayers in the direction of Bayt al-Maqdas after which the order to change the Qiblah was issued and all of them were obliged to face the Ka’bah while offering their prayers.

In verse 15 of Sūratul Nisā, the punishment stipulated for women, who committed fornication, was that if four witnesses testified to the crime they should be imprisoned in the house until death overtook them or until the time Allāh ﷻ decreed another alternative for them.

This verse was abrogated by means of verse 2 of Sūratul Nūr in which their punishment was changed to one hundred lashes.

At this juncture, there is a well-known objection, which is propounded as follows: If the first ruling possessed expediency and common good, then why was it abrogated? And if not, why was it legislated in the first place?

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pg. 37

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 10, pg. 204

In other words: Why was this ruling not legislated from the very beginning so as to not have needed alteration?

Islamic scholars, since ancient times, have presented the answer to this question in their books which, together with our explanation, is as follows:

We do know that at times, with the change in time and conditions of the environment, man's needs change while at other times they remain stable. One day a programme guarantees his success while on another day, due to changes in circumstances, it is likely that the same programme acts as an obstacle in his path of progress.

One day a particular medicine is extraordinarily effective for a sick person and so the doctor prescribes it for him, but on another day, due to a comparative betterment of his state, it is possible that this medicine could even be detrimental for him and so the doctor orders it to be discontinued and substitutes it with another medicine.

It is possible that a book is beneficial for a student this year but useless for him the next. An experienced teacher should adjust the course such that year after year only those books, which are necessary for the students and ought to be taught.

This issue, especially in view of the laws regarding the development of man and societies, becomes clearer; in the course of human development and perfection, at times a programme is beneficial and constructive while at times, detrimental and therefore in need of a change. The need for changing the curriculum at various time-intervals appears to become more manifest, particularly during the start of social and ideological revolutions.

Of course, it ought not to be forgotten that the fundamentals of Divine laws which constitute the basic foundations are the same everywhere; under no circumstances shall Unity, social justice or hundreds of other such rulings ever undergo an alteration. The change only occurs in secondary issues.

Additionally, it should not be forgotten that indeed the development of religions can reach such a state that the final religion is revealed as the Seal of the religions, such that there can be no alteration in its rulings.¹⁶⁸

37. Is it correct to label days as auspicious and inauspicious?

Among many people, it is a usual practise to consider some days to be blessed while some others to be inauspicious and sinister - although great differences prevail amongst man in singling them out. Nevertheless, the point of discussion is: To what extent is this general belief accepted in Islam? Or does it have its origins in Islam?

Of course, intellectually, it is not impossible that parts of time differ from each other - some possessing the characteristics of auspiciousness while others possessing contrary characteristics - however, we have no means to either establish or refute the issue. All we can say is that such a thing is possible despite not having been proved by means of rational proofs.

Accordingly, if we come to possess religious proofs that reach us by way of revelation and which serve to illuminate wider horizons for us in connection with this issue, not only is there no harm in accepting them, but on the contrary, its acceptance becomes essential.

There are only two instances in the Qur'ān which allude to inauspicious days - verse 19 of Sūratul Qamar and verse 16 of Sūratul Fuṣṣilat - and which narrate the story of the people of 'Ād:

﴿فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحِسَاتٍ﴾

“So We sent on them a furious wind in unlucky days.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 390

¹⁶⁹ It should be noted that the term نحسات, which appears in the verse, is an adjective for the term أيام, i.e. the mentioned days have been described as inauspicious, whereas in the verse presently under discussion (في يوم نحس مستمر),

On the other hand, the expression مبارك (blessed) too is observed in some of the verses of the Qur'ān, as is mentioned in connection with the Night of Qadr:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ... ﴾

“Surely We revealed it on a blessed night...”¹⁷⁰

Originally, نحس means ‘extraordinary redness of the horizon’, which makes it appear as نحاس meaning ‘a flame of fire that is devoid of smoke’ and then, in this case, it is employed to mean ‘inauspicious’.

Thus, the Qur'ān does not possess anything more than a vague allusion to this issue; however, as far as Islamic traditions are concerned, a number of them mention auspicious and inauspicious days. And although some of them are weak and, at times, mixed with traditions that have been fabricated or associated with superstition, nonetheless not all of them are such for undoubtedly there do exist genuine traditions amongst them, and the commentators too, whilst interpreting the above verses, have attested to this fact.

‘Allāmah Majlisī, the great scholar of traditions has presented many traditions in this regard in his book *Biḥārul Anwār*.¹⁷¹

There are a few points that briefly need to be mentioned here: In a number of traditions, auspicious and inauspicious days have been interpreted in connection with the events that have transpired on those days. For example, in a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام we read that a person sought to know from him, which was the Wednesday that the people considered to be inauspicious? The Imām عليه السلام replied: That is the last Wednesday of the month which occurs during the waning of the moon. It was on this day that

the term يوم has been annexed to نحس and does not possess the descriptive meaning. However, with reference to the context of the above verse, we have to admit that in this case, the noun has been annexed to the adjective.

¹⁷⁰ *Sūratul Dukhān* (44), Verse 3

¹⁷¹ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, Chapter al-Samā wa al-Ālam, pg. 1 to 91

Qābīl killed his brother Hābīl ... And on this day of Wednesday, Allāh sent the windstorm over the people of ‘Ād.¹⁷²

And therefore, numerous commentators, on the basis of abundant traditions, have declared the last Wednesday of the month to be inauspicious and refer to it as:

الْأَرْبَعَاءُ لَا تَدُورُ.

“The Wednesday that shall never recur.”

Some other traditions declare the first day of the month to be auspicious and blessed since Ādam ﷺ was created on that day, and similarly for the 26th day of the month, for Allāh ﷻ had split the sea asunder for Mūsā ﷺ on that day.¹⁷³

A few state that the third day of the month is inauspicious for on that day Ādam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, and the clothes of Paradise were taken away from them.¹⁷⁴

Others claim that the seventh day is a blessed one, for on that day Nūḥ ﷺ climbed aboard his ship (and was delivered from the flood).¹⁷⁵

Or what we read in connection with Nawroz, in a tradition from Imām as-Ṣādiq ﷺ, when he said: “It is a blessed day since it was on this day that Nūḥ’s ﷺ ark came to rest upon the (Mount) Jūdī, Jibrā’īl descended upon the Noble Prophet ﷺ, ‘Alī ﷺ climbed upon the shoulders of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and destroyed the idols of the Ka’bah, and the event of Ghadīr Khum took place...”¹⁷⁶

Such interpretations, which tend to correlate auspicious and inauspicious days with desirable and undesirable events, are mentioned many times in narrations. This is especially observed with respect to the day of ‘Āshūra because the Umayyads,

¹⁷² *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaḳalāin*, vol. 5, pg. 183, no. 25

¹⁷³ *Tafsīr Nūrul Thaḳalāin*, vol. 5, pg. 105

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 58

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 61

¹⁷⁶ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 92

considering themselves to be victorious over the Ahlul Bayt عليه السلام, regarded it as an auspicious day – a concept that has been prohibited in no uncertain terms in the traditions. Traditions forbid people to regard it as a blessed day and also warn them that this day should not be considered to be a day for hoarding the provisions of the year; in fact, trade should be stopped on that day and one should practically distance oneself from the scheme of the Umayyads.

Collectively, these traditions have led some people to be of the opinion that Islam intends to draw the attention of the Muslims towards these incidents so that they learn from these events with respect to their deeds, and distance themselves from destructive episodes and those who were involved in them.

This interpretation could be true with respect to some traditions, but undoubtedly this is not so for all of them since, from some of the traditions, it can be inferred that occasionally, in some of these days, there exists a mysterious influence of which we are not aware.

Another point which demands attention is that some people carry the issue of auspicious and inauspicious days to such extremes that before attempting any task, they wait for such days and, in the process, lag behind in numerous activities and let golden opportunities slip out of their hands.

Or that instead of investigating the causes of the successes and failures of themselves and others, and benefiting from the invaluable experiences, they thrust the blame of all failures upon the inauspicious of the days, just as they search for the secret of successes in the blessed days!

This is a kind of escapism from reality, extremism in the issue and a superstitious explanation for life's events – something that ought to be intensely avoided. In such issues, attention should not be paid to the hearsays amongst the people, the words of the astrologers or the fortune tellers. If something in this regard is established by means of authentic traditions, it must be accepted but if not, then, with scant regard for the words of every Tom, Dick and Harry, one

ought to continue one's life, advance firmly by means of one's efforts and hard work, and rely upon Allāh and seek His help.

Attention towards auspicious and inauspicious of days, in addition to guiding man towards a series of didactic historical events, also serves to make him mindful of Allāh ﷻ and turn to Him for assistance. It is for this reason we read in the traditions: On the days that have been branded as inauspicious, you can, after giving charity or reciting supplications or seeking Allāh's ﷻ help or reciting some of the verses of the Noble Qur'ān and placing your reliance on Allāh ﷻ, pursue your work and emerge successful.

In a tradition we read that one of the companions of Imām Ḥasan 'Askarī ؑ came to meet him on a Tuesday, whereupon the Imām ؑ said: "I did not see you yesterday."

The man replied: "Yesterday was a Monday and I was disinclined to move out on this day!" The Imām ؑ replied: "One who desires to remain protected from the evils of Monday, should recite Sūrat Hal Atā in the first rak'at of his morning prayer." The Imam then recited this verse from Sūrat Hal Atā (which bears relation to warding away the evils.)¹⁷⁷

﴿فَوَقَاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ﴾

"Therefore Allāh will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness."

It has been reported in another tradition that one of the companions of the sixth Imām ؑ asked him: "Is it appropriate to embark upon a journey on the abominable days like Wednesday or other like days?"

The Imām ؑ replied: "Commence your journey by giving charity, recite Ayatul Kursī when you intend to start out (and then proceed wherever you desire."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 39, no. 7

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 28

It has been reported in a tradition that a companion of Imām ‘Alī ibne Muḥammad al-Hādi ؑ says: “I arrived in the presence of the Imām ؑ in such a state that while on the way, I had wounded my finger, a rider had collided with me injuring my shoulder, and I had got entangled in the midst of a multitude and my garments were torn.” I exclaimed: “O’ Day! May Allāh protect me from your evil! What an evil day you are! Having heard this, the Imām ؑ admonished him: “You are associated with us and yet you utter such things? You consider the day to be an offender when it has committed no offense?”

The narrator says: Hearing these words, I came to my senses and, realizing my mistake, said to him ؑ: “O’ My Master! I am repentant and seek Allāh’s forgiveness. The Imām ؑ added: “What crime have the days committed that you consider them to be inauspicious; it is only the consequences of your own deeds that come to afflict you in these days?”

The narrator says: “I shall continually seek forgiveness of Allāh and this shall be my repentance, O’ Son of the Prophet of Allāh!”

The Imām ؑ said: “This shall not prove beneficial for you; Allāh shall punish you for reproaching something that did not deserve reproach. Don’t you know that Allāh rewards and punishes, and shall recompense the deeds in this world and the Hereafter. He ؑ then added: Henceforth do not repeat this act and do not ascribe any effects to the days vis-à-vis Allāh’s rulings!”¹⁷⁹

This profound tradition alludes to the fact that even if the days happen to possess an influence, it is only upon the orders of Allāh. Never should they be looked upon as possessing an independent influence and never should one be looked upon as being independent of Allāh’s grace.

¹⁷⁹ *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl*, as quoted in *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 59, pg. 2 (with a slight abridgment).

Thus, one should not associate the occurrence of events, which mainly possess an expiatory aspect with respect to man's wrongful deeds, with the influence of the days and in this manner attempt to exonerate oneself. This explanation is perhaps the best way to resolve the conflict between the various traditions that exist in this regard.¹⁸⁰

38. Is the incident of the 'People of the Cave' corroborated by present-day science?

It is possible that some people might harbour scepticism regarding the protracted sleep of the People of the Cave which had extended for years, and consider it to be incompatible with scientific standards and thus look upon it as a myth or legend, since:

Firstly: Such a long life of several hundred years is unlikely for those who are awake, let alone those who are in a state of sleep!

Secondly: Even if we were to accept the possibility of such a long life for one who is awake, it would be inconceivable for one who is asleep. This is because, in this case, the issue of food and nutrition comes to the fore; how is it possible for a person to remain alive for such a long period without food and water? If, supposedly, we were to assume to need one kilo of food and one litre of water per day, more than a hundred tons of food and a hundred thousand litres of water would be required for the life of the People of the Cave, and storing this quantity of food and water within the body is impossible.

Thirdly: Even if we were to overlook all of these, yet, the problem which surfaces is that the stationing of a body under monotonous conditions for such a lengthy period of time harms its physical organism and causes great wastages.

At first glance, these objections might appear to be insurmountable obstacles in the path of this issue. However this is not so, since:

¹⁸⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 23, pg. 41

Firstly: The issue of a lengthy life is not one that is unscientific, for we are aware that according to science, the life-span of no living entity possesses fixed and stipulated standards such that when the moment that is reached, death is inevitable.

In other words, while it is true that the physical strengths of man are finite and limited, this does not mean that the body of a man or another living entity does not possess the strength and ability to live longer than what is normal. It does not mean that just as water begins to boil when its temperature is raised to 100 degrees and turns to ice when it is lowered to zero, man likewise, when he reaches the age of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years, his heart necessarily ceases to function and he dies.

Rather, the life-span of living entities is related to the state of their lives, and is completely changeable by altering the lifestyle. A living testimony for this is that on the one hand none of the scientists of the world have set a definite scale for the life of man, while on the other, in the laboratories they have been successful to occasionally increase the longevity of living entities two fold or even several times, and at times increasing it twelve times over. They even assure us that in the future, by means of new scientific techniques, the life-span of man would increase several times more than his present one. The above discussion was in connection with the basic issue of longevity.

Secondly: As far as the issue of food and water during this prolonged sleep is concerned, had this been an ordinary and normal sleep, we would have accepted the protestor's objection, for then, the issue would have been incompatible with the basic scientific principles. This is because, despite the fact that the metabolic activity of the body in a state of sleep is much lower than that during wakefulness, however, collectively and over several years it would be very great. However it must be realized that in the world of nature there exist certain states of sleep - in which food consumption is extremely trivial - such as hibernation.

HIBERNATION

There are numerous animals which sleep all through the winter and undergo what is scientifically referred to as hibernation.

In this kind of sleep, the arterial activities almost come to a standstill with only an extremely feeble flame of them remaining alight. The heart almost stops beating, or to state it more correctly, its beatings become so feeble and inconspicuous that it can hardly be sensed.

In such conditions, the body can be compared to a large furnace, which, when turned off, has its pilot light left burning. It is evident that the daily fuel requirement of that furnace for keeping its towering flames alight could possibly cater to the fuel requirements for tens or hundreds of years of that intensely small pilot light (of course, this is dependent upon the flames of the furnace and that of the pilot light).

In connection with the hibernation of some of the animals, the scientists state as follows:

If we were to draw out a frog in hibernation, it would appear dead - its lungs contain no air and its heartbeats are so feeble so as to be imperceptible. Numerous butterflies, insects, earth snails and reptiles are some of the cold-blooded animals that undergo hibernation. Some of the warm-blooded mammals too undergo hibernation. During hibernation, arterial activities greatly decrease and the fat that has been stored in their bodies is slowly consumed.¹⁸¹

Thus, we have a kind of sleep in which the need for food and nutrition is extraordinarily reduced and the principal activities of the body almost come to a standstill. Incidentally, this very issue assists to prevent the wear and tear of the organs, and adds to the life of these animals. Essentially hibernation for these animals,

¹⁸¹ An extract from the book *Farhangnameh*, under 'zimistānkhwābi'

which are apparently unable to procure their food during winter, is an invaluable opportunity.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: BURIAL OF THE AZTECS

It has also been observed in the case of Aztecs, that some of them are placed within a coffin before the unbelieving eyes of the amazed onlookers, and at times, buried for a period of even one week. After the conclusion of the period they are taken out and provided massage and artificial respiration in order to help them slowly return to normalcy.

Even if the need for food during this period can be considered to be unimportant, the need for oxygen would surely be vital, for we are aware of the sensitivity of the cerebral cells, especially with respect to oxygen. Their need for this vital element is so great that should they remain deprived of it even for a few minutes, they would perish. Now, how is it that the Aztecs endures the lack of oxygen for, say, a period of around one week?

In the light of the explanation presented by us, the answer to this question is not very difficult. During this period, the principal activities of the body of the ascetic almost comes to a standstill as a result of which, the oxygen requirement and consumption of the cells is drastically reduced to such an extent that the air trapped within the coffin is sufficient for nourishing the cells of his body for one whole week!

FREEZING THE BODY OF A LIVING PERSON

In connection with the issue of freezing the body of animals and even man (for lengthening their life-spans), there exist numerous theories and discussions, some of which have already been realized.

According to these theories it is possible, by placing the body of a man or an animal in sub-zero temperatures below using a special technique, to halt his life without him actually dying and after a period, when necessary, subject him to a suitable temperature and again bring him back to his normal state!

For space travels to far-flung planets which could probably take hundreds or thousands of years, several proposals have been presented, one of them being the idea that the body of the astronaut should be placed in a special container and frozen, and upon nearing the planet under consideration, the temperature within the container should be restored to normal by means of an automatic system. This would cause the astronauts to return to their normal states without having aged!

A leading science magazine reported that recently a book, written by Robert Nielson in connection with freezing the body of man for achieving a long life, has been published and has drawn widespread response in the scientific world.

In an article written in the abovementioned magazine and devoted to this issue, it has been asserted that lately, a new field of science has emerged which deals with this very topic. The article states: “All through the ages, possessing an eternal life has always been one of the deep-rooted and golden dreams of man; however, this dream has presently turned into a reality and is indebted to the wonderful advancements achieved in a new science called cryogenics (a science, which takes man to the icy worlds, preserving him as a frozen body in the hope of a day when scientists return him to life again.)”

Is this logic feasible? Numerous distinguished scientists are working on the issue from various dimensions, and publications such as *Life* and *Esquire*, and also newspapers all over the world have intensely debated this concept; and more significant is the fact that a programme is being implemented at this present moment.¹⁸²

Recently, the newspapers reported that amidst the polar ices - which, as shown by their layers, date back to several thousand years - a frozen fish was found, which, when placed in water of room temperature sprang to life again and began moving around!

¹⁸² The magazine *Daanishmand*, month of Bahman, Number 47, pg. 4

It is clear that while frozen the vital systems, unlike during death, do not entirely cease to function, but only become extraordinarily slack.

From all these discussions we infer that it is possible to bring life to a standstill or to an extraordinary state of slackness – a possibility, which has been attested by various scientific studies.

In such a state, the consumption of food by the being is almost reduced to zero as a result of which, the small reserves that exist within the body can be sufficient for maintaining its slow life for several long years.

However, the above explanation should not be mistaken to mean that we wish to deny the miraculous nature of the sleep of the People of the Cave; rather, we desire to facilitate a better comprehension of the occurrence by means of scientific explanations.

This is because, without any doubt, the sleep of the People of the Cave was not a common and ordinary sleep like our daily sleep; it was a sleep that was indeed exceptional in nature. Thus, there is no room for astonishment that they (by Allāh's orders) had drifted into a protracted slumber, neither suffering from lack of nutrition nor their physical organs suffering any harm!

Interestingly, from the verses of *Sūratul Kahf* which relate their story, it appears that their sleep differed vastly from normal sleep:

﴿ وَ تَحْسِبُهُمْ أَنْقَاطًا وَ هُمْ رُقُودٌ ... لَوْ اِطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَكَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَ لَمَلَّئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا ﴾

“And you might think them awake while they were asleep...if you looked at them you would certainly turn back from them in flight, and you would certainly be filled with awe because of them.”¹⁸³

¹⁸³ *Sūratul Kahf*(18), Verse 18

This verse is indicative of the fact that they were not overcome by an ordinary sleep; rather, they slept – in a manner that made them resemble a dead person – with their eyes kept open!

In addition, the Qur’ān says: The sunrays did not enter their cave. And considering the fact that their cave was possibly located on one of the altitudes of Asia Minor in a chilly location, the exceptional nature of their sleep becomes all the more manifest.

On the other hand, the Qur’ān says:

﴿ وَنُقَلِّبَهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ﴾

“And We turned them about to the right and to the left.”¹⁸⁴

This reveals that they were not in an entirely monotonous state; mysterious elements, which are until unknown to us, would turn them on their sides alternatively (possibly once in a year) so that their bodies do not suffer harm.

Now that this scientific discussion has become sufficiently clear, drawing inference from it with respect to the topic of Resurrection would not demand a detailed discussion for waking up after a prolonged sleep is not totally unlike coming to life after death, and serves to facilitate a better comprehension of the possibility and occurrence of Resurrection.^{185 and 186}

39. What is intended by the seven Heavens?

There are seven verses in the Noble Qur’ān which speak of سماوات سبع (seven heavens).

From amongst all the various interpretations that have been mentioned in this regard, the interpretation which appears to be most applicable is that سماوات سبع means exactly what it states: The seven heavens; however, heaven does not mean planets, but rather

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ For further explanation in this regard, refer the book *Ma’ad Wa Jahān Pas Az Marg*.

¹⁸⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 12, pg. 406

the entire collection of stars and celestial objects of the upper world; and seven is the number and an allegorical expression denoting multiplicity.

However, from other verses of the Qur'ān it can be deduced that all the stars, planets, galaxies and nebulae that we observe are all associated with the collection of the first heaven. Accordingly, beyond this gigantic collection that we witness, there exist six other colossal collections (six heavens) - each one greater than the other - which are beyond the reach of human knowledge (at least for the present).

In verse 6 of Sūratul Ṣāffāt, we read:

﴿ إِنَّا زَيْنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ ﴾

“Surely We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars.”

Verse 12 of Sūratul Fuṣṣilat says:

﴿ وَزَيْنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ ﴾

“...and We adorned the lower heaven with brilliant stars.”

And this very meaning, albeit with a slight difference, has also been mentioned in verse 5 of Sūratul Mulk.

Interesting to note is the fact that the late ‘Allāmah Majlisī has also mentioned this as one of the interpretations of the verse. In his book *Biḥārul Anwār*, he states: The third probability that strikes my mind is that all the firmaments that have been established for the celestial objects are referred to as the ‘lower heaven’!¹⁸⁷

It is true that our present day scientific instruments have been unable to uncover the other six worlds as yet. However, as far as science is concerned, there is no evidence to deny their existence;

¹⁸⁷ *Biḥārul Anwār*, vol. 55, pg. 78

and it is quite probable that this enigma shall be solved in the future.

In fact, discoveries of some astronomers indicate signs of the existence of other worlds, at this present moment. This is similar to the statement released by the renowned Palomar Observatory in connection with the enormity of the universe and that which we have previously presented. The portion of it, which substantiates our words, states:

By means of the telescope of the Palomar Observatory millions of new galaxies have been discovered, some of which are at a distance of a thousand million light years from us. However, beyond the distance of a thousand million light years, a gigantic, dark and dreadful space meets the eye within which nothing can be seen and observed. But undoubtedly, within that dark and dreadful space there exist hundreds of millions of galaxies, such that the world on our side is held together in place by the gravitational force of those galaxies. This entire gigantic universe, which meets our eyes and possesses hundreds of thousands of millions of galaxies, is nothing but a small and trivial speck in comparison to a more gigantic universe ... and we are not yet certain that beyond that second universe there does not exist yet another universe!¹⁸⁸

Another scientist, in a detailed article written in connection with the enormity of the world of existence, after discussing the vast and astounding distances between the galaxies and presenting stupendous figures, all of which were in terms of light years, says: Until this juncture, the astronomers are of the opinion that presently they have only managed to proceed halfway towards the 'visible' fringes of the colossal universe ... they still need to seek out the undiscovered space!¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ *Majallāh Fadhā*, Number 56, month of Farwardeen, 351

¹⁸⁹ *Newsweek*, year 1964. (It should not be forgotten that this testimony is related to 24 years earlier.)

Thus, the worlds that have opened up before man - despite all their enormity - constitute just a mere speck of this gigantic universe, and can be reconciled with the issue of the seven heavens.¹⁹⁰

40. Is the annihilation of the solar system during the countdown towards the Day of Judgment consistent with our present-day knowledge?

In the first verse of Sūratul Takwīr, regarding the issue of Resurrection, we read:

﴿إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ وَ إِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ﴾

“When the sun is covered and when the stars darken.”

In view of the above verses, the question that looms up is: Is the dying out of the sun and ... consistent with the present day knowledge?

Primarily it ought to be realized that although the sun, a life-giving hub of this system of ours, is a mediocre and average star in comparison to other celestial stars per se, and in comparison to the earth, it is extraordinarily gigantic – its volume, according to studies conducted by the scientists, being one million and three hundred thousand times that of the earth. However, since it is at a distance of one hundred and fifty million kilometres from us, it is seen in its present size.

It is sufficient, for the purpose of personifying the greatness and expansiveness of the sun, to know that if the earth and the moon were to be placed within the sun at the same distance as they presently possess, the moon would very comfortably revolve around the earth without even moving out of the periphery of the sun!

The surface temperature of the sun is said to be in excess of six thousand degrees centigrade while its internal temperature is determined to be several million degrees!

¹⁹⁰ *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur’an*, vol. 2, pg. 179

If we wish to mention its weight in terms of tonnes, we would have to follow up the figure ‘2’ with twenty seven zeroes (two billion billion tonnes)!

Towering flames leap outwards from the surface of the sun to a distance of more than one hundred and sixty thousand kilometres – a distance within which the earth could easily get lost, since the diameter of the earth is no more than twelve thousand kilometres.

The source of heat and light energy of the sun, contrary to what some imagine, is not due to burning; according to George Gamuf, as stated in his book (translated in Persian in the name of) *Paidaish Wa Marg-e-Khurshīd*, had the sun been created entirely of anthracite and had it been set alight during the time of the first Pharaoh of Egypt, it should have been totally burnt up by now, leaving behind nothing but ashes. Assume any other fuel in place of anthracite and you would be facing this same dilemma.

The reality is that it is incorrect to associate the concept of ‘burning’ with the sun; its energy is obtained by means of atomic fission and we are aware that this energy is extraordinarily intense and great. Thus, the atoms of the sun are in a state of perpetual decomposition, radiation and transformation into energy, and, according to the calculations of scientists, every passing second reduces it by four million tonnes! However, its volume is so monumental that the passage of thousands of years has not affected it in the least and apparently, not the slightest change occurs in its state.

However, it ought to be realized that in the long run, this very aspect would lead to its extinction; this gigantic mass would eventually become smaller and less bright until finally it would lose all its light – this being true for all the other stars too.¹⁹¹

Thus, what has been mentioned in the above verses, in connection with the dying down of the sun and the annihilation of the stars, is a

¹⁹¹ An extract from the book *Paidaish Wa Marg-e-Khurshīd*, *Nujūm-e-Bi Telescope*, and *Sākhtimān-e-Khurshīd*

reality which is entirely consistent with present day knowledge; and the Qur'ān mentioned these realities at a time when none knew of these issues - neither in the Arabian Peninsula nor in the then-scholarly circles of the world.¹⁹²

41. What is magic and how does Islam view it?

There are numerous opinions regarding the question of 'what is magic' and 'when did it come into existence'? Nevertheless, it is evident that magic has been prevalent amongst people since ancient times, but the exact date of its origin is unknown; in addition, it is also not known as to who was the first person to have brought it into existence.

However, with respect to its meaning and essence, it can be said that magic is a kind of supernatural act which has an impact on men; at times it is a kind of jugglery and sleight of hand, while on other occasions it is just psychological and imaginary.

According to the dictionary, magic has two meanings:

Deception, guile, sleight of hand and legerdemain; and according to the book *Qāmus al-Lughah*, magic means 'to deceive'.

كُلُّ مَا لَطْفَ وَ دَقَّ.

"All such things, the causes of which are invisible and mysterious."

In Rāghib's book *al-Mufradāt*, which is devoted to analysing words appearing in the Qur'ān, three meanings have been mentioned for it:

- a. Deception and imaginations, which are devoid of reality - like sleight of hand.
- b. Attracting the Satans by special means and seeking assistance from them.

And there is another meaning that some have been given to imagine and that is: It is possible to transform the essence and form of

¹⁹² *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 26, pg. 185

people or entities by certain means; for example, transforming man by means of it, into an animal. However, this kind is nothing more than mere fancy, and without an iota of reality.¹⁹³

Studying the 51 instances of the usage of the word سحر (magic) and its derivatives in the chapters of the Noble Qur’ān, such as Ṭāhā, Shu’arā, Yūnus, A’rāf, etc., in connection with the stories of the prophets Mūsā ؑ, Isā ؑ and the Noble Prophet ﷺ, we conclude that magic, according to the Qur’ān, can be classified into two categories:

Those instances wherein the objective is deception, jugglery, sleight of hand and legerdemain and possesses no reality, as we read:

﴿فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَى﴾

“Then lo! their cords and their rods-- it was imaged to him on account of their magic as if they were running.”¹⁹⁴

Another verse says:

﴿فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا أَعْيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ﴾

“So when they cast, they deceived the people’s eyes and frightened them, and they produced a mighty enchantment.”¹⁹⁵

From these verses it can be ascertained that magic does not possess any reality such that it could exert control over things, and leave an impact and influence upon them. Rather, it is jugglery of the magicians that gives the impression of magic.

From some of the verses of the Qur’ān it can be inferred that certain kinds of magic do yield an influence, such as this verse, which says:

﴿فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ﴾

¹⁹³ *al-Mufradāt* of Rāghib (سحر)

¹⁹⁴ *Sūrat Ṭāhā* (20), Verse 66

¹⁹⁵ *Sūratul A’rāf* (7), Verse 116

“Even then men learned from these two, magic by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife.”¹⁹⁶

Another verse of the Qur’ān says that they learned things that were detrimental to them and not at all beneficial.

﴿وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ﴾

“And they learned what harmed them and did not profit them.”¹⁹⁷

But, are the effects of magic purely psychological or can it possess a physical impact too? The above verses possess no allusion to this, and hence some are of the opinion that the effects of magic are purely psychological in nature.

At this juncture it is essential to mention another point: It appears that a considerable portion of magic was enacted by making use of certain physical and chemical properties, and performed with the intention of defrauding simple-minded people.

For example, we read in history that the magicians of the time of Mūsā عليه السلام used to place some special chemical substances within their cords and staffs (possibly mercury or some like substance) which, as a result of sunshine or under the influence of a heating apparatus that they had devised under them, would come out in motion and the spectators would be given to imagine that they had come to life. Such kinds of sorcery, even in our times, are not rare.

MAGIC, IN THE EYES OF ISLAM

In this regard, all the Islamic jurists have declared the learning and practicing of magic to be prohibited.

Furthermore, we present some traditions that have been narrated from the Imāms عليهم السلام and which have been reported in authentic books.

Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام says:

¹⁹⁶ *Sūratul Baqarah* (2), Verse 102

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ شَيْئًا مِنَ السِّحْرِ قَلِيلًا أَوْ كَثِيرًا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَ كَانَ آخِرُ عَهْدِهِ
بِرَبِّهِ.

“One who learns magic, less or more, has become an infidel and his association with Allāh is completely severed.”¹⁹⁸

However, as we have mentioned, if it is for the purpose of nullifying the sorcery of the sorcerers, then there is no harm in it. Rather, at times, on the basis of general obligation (wājib kifā'i) some individuals must necessarily learn it so that they can nullify the sorcery of a false claimant (to prophethood), should he desire to mislead the people by means of sorcery, and thus lay bare his lies and false claims. And testifying to this is a tradition of Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, which states that one of the magicians, who used to take money for performing his magic, approached the Imām عليه السلام and said: Sorcery had been my profession; I would take money for it and in this manner managed to meet the expenses of my life. I even performed the Ḥajj by means of this income, however now I have abandoned it and have repented. Is there a way for me to achieve deliverance? The Imām عليه السلام replied: Open the knots of magic but do not tie the knots of sorcery.¹⁹⁹

From this tradition it can be inferred that it is permissible to learn and practice magic if it is for the purpose of nullifying the (evil) effects of magic.²⁰⁰

42. What is the aim of Taqiyyah (Dissimulation)?

It is true that, at times, man is prepared to sacrifice his dear life for the sake of lofty causes - safeguarding honour, supporting the truth and exterminating falsehood - but can any sane and intellectual person permit man to imperil his life for an unimportant cause and objective?

¹⁹⁸ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, Chapter 25 from the chapters of Mā Yuktasabu bihi, no. 7

¹⁹⁹ *Wasā'il ash-Shī'a*, Chapter 25 from the chapters of Mā Yuktasabu bihi, no. 1

²⁰⁰ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 1, pg. 377

TAQIYYAH - A DEFENSIVE SHIELD

Islam has explicitly permitted that when a person's life, wealth or honour is in danger and manifestation of the Truth yields no significant benefit, he should refrain from manifesting it, and continue to fulfill his responsibilities secretly and in a concealed manner - as the Qur'an has indicated in verse 28 of Sūrat Āle 'Imrān or in verse 106 of Sūratul Nahḥ, when it says:

﴿إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَ قَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ﴾

“Except he, who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith.”

History and the books of Islamic traditions have not forgotten the story of 'Ammār and his parents and how they had fallen into the clutches of the idolaters, who subjected them to intense persecutions in order that they disown Islam. 'Ammār's parents refused and were killed by the polytheists, but 'Ammār uttered what they wished to hear and then, weeping out of Allāh's fear, hastened towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who consoled him by saying:

إِنْ عَادُوا لَكَ فَعَدِّ لَهُمْ.

“If they seize you again, say out what they desire you to speak out, and in this manner put his anxiety to rest.”

The point that needs to be taken into complete regard is that taqiyyah does not possess one ruling on all occasions - at times it becomes compulsory while on occasions it becomes prohibited while there are instances when it is permissible to either adopt it or decline it.

Taqiyyah becomes obligatory when a person's life is endangered for no important benefit, however, when taqiyyah becomes a cause for the promotion of falsehood, deviation of people and strengthening of tyranny, it is unacceptable.

And it is on this basis that all the objections leveled in connection with this issue shall be answered. If the faultfinders were to have conducted a study in this regard, they would have concluded that the Shī'ites are not alone in this belief since the issue of taqiyyah, per se, is a categorically rational ruling and in accordance with the natural disposition of man.²⁰¹

This is because, when the wise and intelligent people of the world find themselves at a cross road wherein they have to either disregard manifesting their internal beliefs or manifest them and in the process place their lives, wealth and honour in peril, they take stock of the situation. If the manifestation of their beliefs is in an instance which deserves the sacrifice of one's life, wealth and reputation, they regard such a sacrifice as correct, but if they do not perceive great effects and benefits in performing such an act, they refrain from revealing their beliefs.

TAQIYYAH - A CHANGE IN THE FORM OF COMBAT

In the course of religious, social and political struggles, there are times when, if the defenders of a right cause were to engage in a manifest combat, they, as well as their cause would either be obliterated or in the very least, find themselves in jeopardy – like the state of the Shī'ites of 'Alī عليه السلام during the period of the rule of the usurper Umayyads. In such situations, the correct and rational way is to refrain from uselessly squandering one's forces and to embark upon an indirect combat to advance towards the achievement of the sacred objectives. In reality, taqiyyah, for such sects and their followers in such circumstances, can be looked upon as a kind of change of form of combat, which would save them from destruction and grant them success in the continuation of their struggle. It is not known what plan those who totally reject taqiyyah have to present for such situations? What is better – to be destroyed or to carry on the struggle in a logical and correct form?

²⁰¹ An extract from the book *Āīn-e-Mā*, pg. 364

The former is something which none can recommend, while the latter is nothing but taqiyyah itself.²⁰²

The true Muslims, the protégés of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, possessed an astonishing spirit of endurance against the enemies. Some of them, such as ‘Ammār’s father, despite the fact that their hearts were replete with faith in Allāh and love for the Noble Prophet ﷺ were unwilling to utter even one sentence that was to the liking of the enemies, and even gave up their lives in the way of Allāh.

And some, like ‘Ammār himself, who were willing to utter the sentence, considered themselves to be accountable for the act and were so overcome with dread that until the Noble Prophet ﷺ reassured them that the act adopted by them as a tactic to save their lives had been totally permitted according to the religious laws, they did not attain ease and tranquility of mind!

Regarding Bilāl we read that when he embraced Islam, and then courageously stood up to defend it and support the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the polytheists subjected him to immense persecution, to the extent that they would drag him under the hot and scorching sun, place a large boulder upon his chest and say to him: Disbelieve in Allāh.

He refused to give in to their demands and, almost on the verge of death, he would repeatedly say: *أحد أحد* (He is the One Allāh, He is the One Allāh). He would then say: By Allāh! Had I known of an utterance that was more distasteful to you than this, I would have surely uttered it (before you!)²⁰³

About Ḥabīb ibne Zayd Anṣārī we read that Mūsāilamah, the Liar, upon capturing him, questioned him: “Do you testify that Muḥammad is the prophet of Allāh?” Ḥabīb replied: “Yes.” He then asked: “Do you testify that I am the prophet of Allāh.” Ḥabīb, by way of ridicule and mockery, said: “I do not hear what you say.”

²⁰² *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 2, pg. 373

²⁰³ The commentary *In the Shade of the Qur’an*, vol. 5, pg. 284

Mūsāilamah and his followers cut him up into pieces, but Ḥabīb stood as firm and steadfast as a mountain.²⁰⁴

There are numerous examples of such shocking instances in the history of Islam - especially during the life of the early Muslims and the companions of the Imāms of the Ahlul Bayt عليهم السلام.

It is for this reason that scholars have declared that in such instances, non-observance of taqiyyah and non-submission before the enemies is permissible, despite the fact that it could result in one's death. This is because the aim is to hold aloft the flag of Unity and monotheism, and ensure the superiority of Islam, and this was an issue that possessed special importance, especially during the initial stages of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ invitation towards Islam.

Despite this, there is no doubt that observing taqiyyah in such cases is permissible, while in cases that are less severe that this, it becomes obligatory. And contrary to what some ignorant individuals are wont to imagine, taqiyyah is neither a sign of weakness, and nor is it fear of the great number of enemies in the face of pressure. Rather, taqiyyah can be viewed as a calculated tactic for protecting the forces and preventing useless loss of believers for the sake of issues that are inconsequential.

It is a common practice all over the world that a small combating minority, in an effort to overthrow an oppressive, selfish and tyrannical majority, chiefly employ the strategy of concealment. They establish an underground group, possess secret plans and on numerous occasions they take up for themselves the appearance of others; even when arrested, they try their very best to ensure that their true acts are not divulged so that they do not lose their forces uselessly and keep them reserved for the continuation of their struggle.

No intellect ever permits that in such situations, the soldiers, who are in a minority, openly manifest themselves and thus get easily

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

identified and detected by the enemy and are subsequently exterminated.

It is for this reason that before being an Islamic strategy, taqiyyah is a logical tactic for all those people, who oppose and combat a strong enemy.

We observe that in the Islamic traditions too, taqiyyah has been compared to a defensive shield. Imām as-Ṣādiq عليه السلام says:

التَّقِيَّةُ تُرْسُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَالتَّقِيَّةُ حِرْزُ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

“Taqiyyah is a believer’s shield and a means for his protection.”²⁰⁵

(Do note that taqiyyah has been compared to a shield, and a shield is a tool that is only employed in the battlefield while fighting the enemy for the purpose of protecting the revolutionary forces.)

And if we observe that in Islamic traditions taqiyyah has been regarded as a symbol of religion, indicative of faith and nine parts out of a total collection of ten parts of religion, it is for this very reason.

Of course, the topic of taqiyyah is a very vast one and this is not the place for dwelling upon it in detail. The only aim of presenting the above discussion was to clarify that the criticisms which some have leveled against this issue, is indicative of their ignorance of the conditions of taqiyyah and the philosophy that lies behind it.

Undoubtedly, there are instances when practicing taqiyyah is prohibited; this is when taqiyyah, instead of serving to protect the forces leads to their destruction or imperils the religion or brings about a great evil. In such cases taqiyyah ought to be disregarded and the consequences, whatever they might be, must be tackled head on.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ *Wasā'il ash-Shi'a*, vol. 11, no. 6, Chapter 24 from the chapters of 'Amr Bil Marūf

²⁰⁶ *Tafsīr-e-Namūna*, vol. 11, pg. 423

43. What is the myth Of Gharāniq or ‘The Satanic Verses’?

A story has been narrated in this regard, which has become popular as the story of Gharāniq. According to this story, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been engaged in reciting Sūratul Najm in front of the polytheists. When he had recited this verse:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَ مَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ﴾

“Have you then considered the Lat and the ‘Uzza; and Manāt, the third, the last?”²⁰⁷, the Satan caused him ﷺ to recite the following two sentences (which were not part of Sūrah) too:

تِلْكَ الْعَرَائِقُ الْعُلَىٰ وَإِنْ شَفَاعَتُهُنَّ لَتُرْجَىٰ.

“They are beautiful, high-ranking birds, and their intercession is anticipated.”²⁰⁸

Hearing this, the polytheists were absolutely thrilled and said: (Muḥammad), until today, had never spoken nicely of our Gods. At that moment the Noble Prophet ﷺ went into prostration and they too prostrated. All the polytheists of the Quraish were ecstatic and then went their ways, but shortly later Jibrā’īl descended and informed him ﷺ: I had not brought for you those two sentences! These were of the inspirations of the Satan!

The following verse was then revealed which cautioned the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the believers²⁰⁹:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ﴾

²⁰⁷ Sūratul Najm (53), Verse 19, 20

²⁰⁸ عَرَائِقُ is the plural of غَرَانِيقُ - a kind of water bird that is white or black in colour. There are other meanings too that have been mentioned (for this word) (as quoted from *Qāmus al-Lughah*).

²⁰⁹ Most of the distinguished commentators have reported this tradition although with a little difference, and have subjected it to a critical examination.

وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

“And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet, but when he desired, the Shayṭān made a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allāh annuls that which the Shayṭān casts, then does Allāh establish His communications, and Allāh is Knowing, Wise.”²¹⁰

If this tradition were to be accepted, it would put a question mark over the infallibility of the prophets, even with respect to receiving the revelation, and would serve to erode away the confidence in them.

At this juncture, before we endeavour to study and critically examine the traditions, we should first separate the text of verse 52 of Sūratul Ḥajj from the traditions fabricated in connection with it and see what the verse actually has to say:

Certainly, the text of this verse, disregarding the false annotations, not only does not taint the infallibility of the prophets but on the contrary, is one of the proofs of their infallibility. This is because, it says: Whenever they possessed a positive plan and desire (every kind of desire is called *امنية*, but here *امنية* refers to a positive and constructive scheme for the advancement of their objectives; if it was not constructive, the Satan would never seek to put whisperings into it) the Satan would attack it, but before he could exert an influence upon their will or acts, Allāh would nullify the Satanic inspirations and fortify His verses.

(It should be noted that the “ف” in *فَيَسْخُطُ اللَّهُ* denotes a sequence without any intervening time interval, i.e. immediately and without any time interval, Allāh would annul and eliminate the inspirations and the whisperings of the Satan.)

Testifying to this statement is another verse of the Qur’ān which explicitly states:

²¹⁰ Sūratul Ḥajj (22), Verse 52

﴿وَلَوْ لَا أَنْ تَبْتَنَّاكَ لَقَدْ كَدْتِ تَرْكُنْ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا﴾

“And had it not been that We had already established you, (and had you not been protected from deviation under the shelter of infallibility) you would certainly have been near to incline to them a little.”²¹¹

In view of the fact that verse 73 of this same chapter indicates that the infidels and the polytheists, by means of their evil insinuations, strived to turn away the Noble Prophet ﷺ from the Divine revelation, it becomes clear that Allāh did not permit them to achieve this success by employing their diabolical suggestions.

Also, in verse 113 of Sūratul Nisā, we read:

﴿وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

“And were it not for Allāh’s grace upon you and His mercy a party of them had certainly designed to bring you to perdition and they do not bring (ought) to perdition but their own souls, and they shall not harm you in any way.”

All these indicate that Allāh, by means of His blessings and succour, never permitted the sinister suggestions of the devils from amongst the men and jinn to affect and influence the Noble Prophet ﷺ, and kept him protected from all kinds of deviation.

All the above is applicable if we take امنية to mean desire, plan and scheme (since, the original roots of this word are traced to assumption, supposition and description).

However, most of the commentators have taken امنية to mean recitation, and some have even sought to corroborate this by presenting poems of Ḥasān ibne Thābit.²¹² Fakhr Rāzī too, in his

²¹¹ Sūratul Isrā’ (17), Verse 74

²¹² تمنى كتاب الله اول ليلة و آخرها لاقى حمام المقادر

commentary, has stated: *تَمَنَّى*, according to the lexicon, possesses two meanings: The first meaning is ‘the desire of the heart’ and the second is ‘recitation’.²¹³

If we were to also take *امنية* to mean recitation, the meaning of the verse would be that when the divine prophets used to recite the Divine verses and sermons before the infidels and the polytheists, the devils and (those possessing satanic attributes) would insert their words amongst the words of the prophets in order to mislead the people, just as they used to do with the Noble Prophet ﷺ too. Verse 26 of *Sūratul Fuṣṣilat* says:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.”

In the light of this meaning, the meaning of the next verse (53 of *Sūratul Ḥajj*) also becomes clear when it says:

﴿ لِيَجْزَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ ﴾

“So that He may make what the Shayṭān casts a trial for those in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are hard.”²¹⁴

In *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, the commentary of the book *Qāmūs*, and also in the actual text of the book *Qāmūs*, *تَمَنَّى* has been stated to mean *تلاوة الكتاب* (recitation of the book). Then, quoting from Azharī, it says: *تلاوة* has been called *امنية* because whenever the reciter reaches a verse of mercy, he desires (Allāh’s) mercy and whenever he reaches a verse of chastisement, he desires deliverance from it. However, the book *Maqāyīs al-Lughah* is of the opinion that this word has been made to mean *تلاوة* because it is a kind of measurement and placement of every verse in its own place.

²¹³ *The Commentary of Fakhr Rāzī*, vol. 23, pg. 51

²¹⁴ Of course, the interpretation of the last verse, on the basis of the first meaning, is not without its objections. This is because the satanic

Even today, it is a common practice that when reformers of human societies deliver beneficial and constructive lectures to a section of the society, at times, those with diseased hearts raise an uproar and by means of misleading slogans and satanic expressions attempt to make light of those speeches and obliterate them by means of their futile utterances. And this, in reality, is an examination for the people of the society and it is here that those with diseased hearts swerve away from the path of truth whereas for the Mu'mins, it becomes a means for acquiring greater awareness of the truthfulness of the prophets ﷺ. This, in turn, would make the people humble towards their invitation to the truth.

﴿ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ ﴾

“And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur’ān) is the Truth from thy Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it.”²¹⁵

inspirations in the souls of the Prophets, despite the fact that they were immediately eliminated and annulled by means of divine succor, cannot be a means of examination for the hypocrites and those possessing diseased hearts. This is because these whisperings do not have any external manifestation and appearance, rather, they are ephemeral inspirations inside the souls of the Prophets.

Except if it is said that the meaning is that when the divine Prophets desired to implement their desires and plans, in practice, the devils engaged themselves in sabotaging and whispering diabolical suggestions - this being the appropriate occasion for trials and examinations. And with this explanation, the coherence and relationship between the three verses (52, 53 and 54 of Sūratul Ḥajj) is preserved and maintained.

Strangely enough, some of the commentators have presented various interpretations and possibilities for the first verse without endeavouring to preserve the harmony between it and the two subsequent verses.

²¹⁵ Sūratul Ḥajj (22), Verse 54

In any case, from what has been stated above, we have realized that the verse under consideration does not contain anything which is inconsistent with the infallibility of the prophets vis-à-vis errors and deviation. Rather, as has been stated before, the verse emphasizes the issue of infallibility since it says that Allāh protects His prophets while they receive the revelation or when they intend to perform some other work, from the satanic inspirations and whisperings.

Now let us turn to the traditions and myths that have been mentioned in this section and deduce their worth, for things have reached such a stage that lately the devils, for the purpose of creating disturbance in connection with the Noble Prophet ﷺ, have set about writing the book *Satanic Verses*.

Just as it had been previously stated, not only did the text of the mentioned verses not possess anything which contradicted the infallibility of the prophets, on the contrary, they prove and establish their infallibility. However, traditions found in some of the secondary Sunnite sources state things that are indeed strange in every respect, and therefore ought to be studied and discussed separately. These traditions, which we had presented at the start of this discussion, have been reported, sometimes, from Ibne ‘Abbas, at other times from Sa‘īd ibne Juba‘ir and occasionally from some other ‘companions’ or ‘followers’.²¹⁶

However, these traditions are not to be seen in any of the Shiite sources and, according to some of the Sunni scholars, these are also not to be found in any of the six *Ṣiḥāḥ* of the Sunni. So much so that Murāghī, in his commentary, says: These traditions are undoubtedly a fabrication of the heretics and foreign hands, and have not been found in any of the authentic books. The fundamentals of the religion of Islam reject them and sound intellect testifies to their

²¹⁶ For more information regarding the chains of narrators of these traditions in the books of the Sunnis, refer the book *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, pg. 366-368, under verse 52 of *Sūratul Ḥajj*.

falsehood and incorrectness...It is obligatory for all the scholars to disregard them and refrain from wasting their time in explaining and interpreting them, especially in view of the fact that trustworthy narrators have explicitly declared them to be lies and fabrications.²¹⁷

We observe this same meaning, although in a different form, in *Tafsīr Jawāhir* of Ṭanṭāwī, wherein he says: These traditions have not been mentioned in any of the Ṣiḥāḥ like *Muwaṭṭa* of Mālik, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, *Jāmi*‘ Tirmidī, *Sunan* Abī Dāwūd and *Sunan* Nisā’ī²¹⁸, and it is for this reason that the book, *Tafsīr al-Wusūl Li Jāmi*‘ *al-Usūl* - a collection of all the interpretive traditions of the six Ṣiḥāḥ - does not report these traditions while interpreting the verses of Sūratul Najm. Thus, it is inappropriate to attach importance to them and talk about them, let alone debate about them... These traditions are just manifest lies²¹⁹

One of the testimonies which Fakhr Rāzī presents to prove it to be a fabrication is that in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* it has been reported from the Noble Prophet ﷺ that when he recited Sūratul Najm, the Muslims and the polytheists, the men and the jinn, all fell into prostration; and the tradition bears no mention of the story of gharānīq. Furthermore, this tradition (which has been reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*) has been reported by several chains of narrators and not the slightest mention of the story of Gharānīq meets the eye.²²⁰

Not only the abovementioned commentators, but even others such as Qurtubi in his commentary *al-Jāmi*‘, Sayyid Qutb in his commentary *Fi Dhilāl al-Qur’ān*, other Sunni scholars and all of the distinguished and celebrated Shi’ite scholars have branded this tradition as a fabrication and have attributed it to the enemies of Islam.

²¹⁷ *Tafsīr Murāghhī*, vol. 17, pg. 130, under the abovementioned verse.

²¹⁸ It should be noted that the book *Muwaṭṭa* of Mālik is not regarded as one of the six Ṣiḥāḥ books. The book *Sunan Ibn Mājah* is the sixth book of the Ṣiḥāḥ.

²¹⁹ *Tafsīr Jawāhir*, vol. 6, pg. 46

²²⁰ *The commentary of Fakhr Rāzī*, vol. 23, pg. 50

As such, it is not strange that the enemies of Islam, especially the inimical Orientalists, have publicized this tradition and reported it with a great deal of embellishment. We have also witnessed that recently they have forced a writer, coming from an evil lineage, to author a book under the title of *The Satanic Verses* and, by means of extremely derogatory and vile expressions in the course of a fictitious and make-believe story, not only question the sanctities of Islam but also exhibit sacrilege towards the great prophets (like Ibrāhīm), who are looked upon with great reverence by all the Divine religions.

And again it is not strange that the English text of this book was translated with astonishing swiftness into different languages and distributed all over the world. And when Āyatullāh Khomeini ﷺ issued his historical fatwa declaring the author, Salman Rushdie, to have become an apostate and thereby deserving to be compulsorily killed, there arose in Rushdie's favour, on the part of the colonial governments and enemies of Islam, a tidal wave of support, so great that the world had never seen the like of it before. This amazing phenomenon revealed the reality that Salman Rushdie was not acting alone, and the issue is much more than just authoring an anti-Islamic book. It is, in fact, a conspiracy that has been chalked out by the Western colonial powers and the Zionists with the objective of bludgeoning Islam – a conspiracy which they support seriously and in great earnest.

But the firm resistance and perseverance of Āyatullāh Khomeini ﷺ in his fatwa, the continuation of his policy on the part of his successors and the global acceptance of this historical fatwa by the general Muslim public served to foil the conspiracy of the conspirators. And until this date, as we write this, the author of the mentioned book leads his life in total concealment and is scrupulously protected by the colonial governments; it appears that he shall be forced to lead the rest of his life in this fashion and probably he might be killed by his very mentors to extricate themselves from this humiliation. Thus, the 'creating cause' for this

fabricated tradition also acts as its ‘preserving cause’, i.e. a conspiracy was initiated on the part of the enemies of Islam and now, after more than a thousand years, another group from amongst them strive to continue this conspiracy, although on a much wider scale.

As such, we do not deem it necessary to present, for this tradition, explanations and justifications which, for example, appear in great detail in the commentary *Rūḥul Maʿānī* and concisely in other commentaries. This is because a tradition, which is fundamentally rotten and which has been emphatically branded as a forgery on the part of eminent Islamic scholars, does not need to be explained.

However, we only wish to present some points which shall provide some more clarification:

The relentless, uncompromising and perpetual fight of the Noble Prophet ﷺ against idolatry, from the beginning of his invitation (to Islam) until the end of his life, is a fact which is not concealed from friend and foe alike. The most important issue for which he was never willing to compromise and exhibit flexibility was this very issue. Despite this, how could he have possibly commended and praised the idols of the polytheists by such words, and spoken of them in good light?

The teachings of Islam declare that the only sin that can never be forgiven and overlooked is polytheism, and it is for this reason that Islam has regarded the destruction of centers of idolatry, whatever the consequence, as obligatory, and the entire Qurʾān is a testimony to this fact. This very fact is clearly indicative of the fabricated nature of the tradition of Gharānīq, in which idols have been commended!

Apart from this, those who have fabricated the story of Gharānīq have overlooked the fact that a cursory reading of the verses of *Sūratul Najm* would be sufficient to prove this myth to be false, and reveal that there exists no harmony between the commendation of the idols by means of the sentence:

تِلْكَ الْغَرَانِيقُ الْعَلِيَّ وَإِنَّ شَفَاعَتَهُنَّ لَتُرْحَى .

and the verses situated before and after it. This is because, in the beginning of this very chapter, it has been explicitly stated that the Noble Prophet ﷺ does not speak of his own desire and whatever he says in connection with the Islamic beliefs and laws, is Divine revelation:

﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾

“Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed.”²²¹

The Qur’ān also emphasizes that the Noble Prophet ﷺ shall never go astray from the true path and never lose himself:

﴿مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ﴾

“Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray.”²²²

What could be greater deviation than interpolating speeches of polytheism and praises of idols within the verses of monotheism? And as for speaking of one’s desire, what could be worse than adding satanic words:

تِلْكَ الْغَرَانِيقُ الْعَلِيَّ

to Allāh’s speech?

Interestingly, the verses following the verses presently under consideration explicitly criticize and denounce the idols and the idol-worshippers and say:

﴿إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ﴾

²²¹ *Sūratul Najm* (53), Verse 3,4

²²² *Ibid.*, Verse 2

“They are naught but names which you have named, you and your fathers; Allāh has not sent for them any authority. They follow naught but conjecture and the low desires which (their) souls incline to; and certainly the guidance has come to them from their Lord.”²²³

Which intellect would be given to believe that a wise and intelligent person, occupying the rank of prophethood and in the process of reciting Divine revelation would, in one sentence, praise the idols while two sentences later deprecate them with such vehemence and intensity? How can this blatant contradiction in two consecutive sentences be explained and justified?

Here we have to acknowledge that the cohesion of the verses of the Noble Qur’ān are such that any impure addition made to it on the part of inimical and tendentious individuals is thrown out, and they clearly reveal it to be a patch which is inharmonious and an addition that is unrelated. This is the fate which the tradition of Gharānīq suffers from amidst the verses of the Noble Qur’ān.

At this juncture, one question remains to be answered and that is: How is it that an issue, so baseless and unsubstantiated, has come to acquire such popularity?

The answer to this question is not very difficult and intricate; the popularity of this tradition is, to a great extent, indebted to the efforts of the enemies of Islam, who imagine that they have managed to lay their hands on a good pretext to blemish the infallibility of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the authenticity of the Noble Qur’ān. Thus, the reason for its popularity amongst the enemies is clearly comprehended. However, its popularity amongst the Islamic historians, according to some of the Islamic scholars, stems from the fact that many of the historians are always on the lookout for new, exciting and exceptional issues - however much there may exist a question mark over their historical authenticity -

²²³ *Sūratul Najm* (53), Verse 23

so that they can make their books more interesting and tumultuous. And since the myth of gharāniq is unprecedented in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, they, without examining the weakness of its chain of narrators and the baseless nature of its contents, record it in their books of history and traditions; subsequently, others dwell upon it with the intention of subjecting it to a critical examination and study.

CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed above, it becomes plain and clear that not only do the verses of the Qur'ān not contain anything which contradicts the infallibility of the prophets, rather, these very verses, which have been imagined to be contradicting it, contain clear indications that accentuate the rank of infallibility for them.²²⁴

²²⁴ *Tafsīr Payām-e-Qur'an*, vol. 7, pg. 164